



A Dark Day for Universal Health Coverage

On December 14, 2018, universal health care programs in both the United States and Mexico were dealt significant blows to their future and impact.



Universal health care programs in the U.S. and Mexico are under challenge by critics.

In an insightful commentary published in *The Lancet* by a trio of authors that includes University of Miami President Julio Frenk and Felicia Marie Knaul, Ph.D., director of the Institute for Advanced Study of the Americas at UM, the authors point out that two universal health care programs are under siege in their respective countries, one they describe as a “mature democracy” and the other – Mexico – which “is a fairly young democracy without the institutional checks and balances that prevent arbitrary decisions.”



The authors examine how the Affordable Care Act in the United States, popularly known as Obamacare, and Mexico's largest public insurance program, known as Seguro Popular (People's Health Insurance), are being challenged by critics. In the U.S., they said, "the challenge to the ACA has been headed by the right wing of the U.S. Republican Party, whereas the attack to Seguro Popular comes mostly from the far left factions" of the Morena party of Mexico's new president, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador.

Frenk, who was the Minister of Health of Mexico from 2000 to 2006, introduced Seguro Popular, which expanded access to health care to more than 50 million previously uninsured Mexicans. He co-authored the commentary with Dr. Knaul, professor of public health sciences at the Miller School of Medicine, and Octavio Gomez-Dantes of the National Institute of Public Health in Mexico.

The authors conclude how important it is to protect programs and institutions that align with the public good.