

18-Mar-98

From:  
Eric J. Lakits  
Westland, MI

To:  
Letter to the Editor  
USA Today

Your article, "Life and death lottery," (cover story, Wednesday, Mar 18) reporting how experimental breast cancer drugs are being given out on a lottery basis, was very revealing. It shows us a perfect example of the madness of socialized medicine, and of how altruism and egalitarianism solve nothing.

When, in making a life and death decision, a computer is used in order to take "all of the humans out of it," the results are anything but "mercilessly objective." Objectivity can only be obtained by accounting for the relevant facts and acting accordingly. Any system which dispenses with facts altogether and leaves results to pure chance is exactly the opposite of objective.

Many times throughout the article the problem is identified as one of supply and demand. In a free market, this simple problem would be solved easily. Supply and demand would dictate the price, and those who could afford the drugs would get them.

However, this is exactly what the egalitarians do not want. The article mentions how one of the concerns was that they did not want the "rich to nudge aside the poor." This policy puts the productive members of society on an equal par with drug addicts and welfare recipients. That is, those who engage in life sustaining productive effort have no more chance at life than those who are lazy or self destructive.

As the article states, "everyone is at equal disadvantage." Why should those with money not have an advantage—especially when the cost of producing these drugs is so much? The companies who manufacture and develop these drugs deserve to profit—or at least make up the cost.

One of the things that make the discovery and the development of new drugs difficult is the high cost. What better way to fund the necessary research than to have those who can afford it do so? With the money that is made, new techniques could be discovered that would make the drugs cheaper and easier to produce, therefore making them available to more people.

The socialists and the egalitarians cry that everyone has a right to these drugs and that they should be available to all. Meanwhile, it takes years for the drugs to make it to the public because the funds are not there. Hence nobody gets them.

In *Atlas Shrugged*, Ayn Rand shows us that this morality of sacrifice is the underlying problem of altruism. Why is it that those who did not produce something have a right to what others did produce based solely on their need? Had those others not produced it, no one would benefit. Not the rich, the poor, nor the lucky few chosen at random in a lottery.

Therefore, the producers have a right to profit from the efforts of their labor. On the one side, those who produced a drug have a right to sell it for what they can get. On the other side, those who produced an abundance of wealth have a right to profit with their lives by trading their wealth for expensive drugs.

Eric J. Lakits  
Westland, MI