Public or Private?
The Experience of the health care system in the Republic of Ireland

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The health care system in Ireland, as in many other developed countries, has developed incrementally over a prolonged historical period and, as elsewhere, seeks to address both demographic and technological challenges and to meet need in an equitable manner. It is two-tiered in structure, with means-tested comprehensive care available to around a third of the population, hospital in-care free to all and tax-subsidised private insurance available to those who can afford it. Access is therefore complex and over the last decade the interface between public and private care has been contentious and hotly debated politically. This presentation will address this system as an example of wider International debate on health policy.

Professor Cecily Kelleher was founder Dean of the University College Dublin School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Population Science and is currently Miegunyah Visiting Fellow at The University of Melbourne. She has had an advisory role in various capacities to successive Ministers of Health in the Republic of Ireland since the early 1990s. She has researched and published widely on aspects of public health policy over that period, participated in numerous policy forums and chaired two statutory bodies, the Women’s Health Council and the Medical Bureau of Road Safety. She has a particular interest in health inequalities.

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