

Virtual Mentor

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VIEWPOINT

Codifying the Rights of All Humans, Children, and Prisoners of War

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- On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society...shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights." Article 25 of the Declaration reads as follows:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control

In 1994, a [Human Rights Fax Hotline](#) was established by the United Nations [Commissioner for Human Rights](#) in order to provide a means for reporting potential human rights abuses around the world. The Hotline fax number in Geneva, Switzerland is 41-22-917-0092.

- Every year, up to 3 million children's lives worldwide are saved by immunization. However, almost the same number of children die from diseases preventable through vaccination. According to the [World Health Organization](#), 1 of 4 children did not receive routine immunization with the 6 basic vaccines against polio, diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, measles and tuberculosis. In 1998, the [Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) established a [Children's Vaccination Program](#) with a \$100 million grant to reduce the time required to deliver lifesaving vaccines to children in developing nations. Since its inception, the Gates Foundation has committed an additional \$750 million towards vaccination programs for children.
- Viruses of the electronic variety can inflict significant harm, similar to the human costs wrought by their biological counterparts. The financial impact of the "Love Bug" computer virus unleashed on May 4, 2000, is estimated to be nearly \$10 billion (mostly in lost data and work time). This whopping figure, incidentally, would have been sufficient to purchase vaccines to inoculate more than 250 million children against the polio virus.
- On December 9, 1946, an American military tribunal opened criminal proceedings against 23 German physicians for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. Evidence from the "Nuremberg Trial of Doctors" shed light on the horrific acts of medical experimentation conducted on thousands of concentration camp prisoners. On August 20, 1947, 16 of the

physicians were found guilty, and the remaining 7 were sentenced to death and subsequently executed on June 2, 1948. Arguably, the greatest legacy of these trials was the [Nuremberg Code](#), which explicitly spells out protections of individuals from the potential abuses of medical research. The first of the 10 Nuremberg Code principles establishes that "voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential" in the conduct of medical research.

- The Star Spangled Banner, a symbol of the personal freedoms and rights that we enjoy, is threatened by more than 180 years of weathering. The flag, made by Mrs. Mary Pickersgill in 1813, was seen flying over Fort McHenry in the aftermath of a great battle on September 14, 1814. Inspired by this glorious scene, Francis Scott Key subsequently penned the words to what would become our national anthem. Today, the Banner is undergoing a multimillion-dollar restoration, scheduled for completion in 2002.
- The Declaration of Independence, our nation's cherished symbol of human liberty and freedom, was drafted by Thomas Jefferson in less than 3 weeks. Meeting in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the Second Continental Congress adopted, after tortuous debate, the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. George Washington, who presided over the Congress, sat in a [chair](#) on which was carved a figure of the sun. Before the final vote, Benjamin Franklin intimated that he had been looking at the sun throughout the deliberation. He was convinced that, for the colonies, it represented a rising and not a setting sun.
- The sun will not set on the *Virtual Mentor* - Version 2.0 is on the way!

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