



Reforming Our Health Care System Cannot Wait

I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly.
(JOHN 10:10)

We pray, ever present God, asking that you bless our efforts to achieve in the United States a holistic health plan that will bless your people — all of your people. We know there are many who wait in silence for a more just system of providing care to all people; be with those who wait, who often do not have a voice. Too many are hurting and suffering from our broken and inequitable health-care system. But you, our God, you always hear our cries in the night. Strengthen us to use our hearts, hands, and voices to fulfill the vision for a health care system that includes everyone and works well for all of us. Work through us, God, to make your will real here on earth, for all of your beloved creation. Amen.

— Adapted from the Interfaith Week of Prayer for Health Care, Washington, D.C., June 19-26, 2009



Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.), author of H.R. 676, gave the keynote address at a PC(USA)-funded seminar in Albany, N.Y., on March 3, 2009. Photo by Cass L. Shaw, general presbyter, Albany Presbytery

The 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (2008) voted to “Endorse in principle the provision of single-payer universal health care reform in which health care services are privately provided and publicly financed.

As called for in this action, the Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, sent a copy of the resolution to members of the U.S. Congress on July 15, 2009, followed on August 13, 2009 by the statement “Reforming our health care system cannot wait.”

Subsequent to the action of the PC(USA) General Assembly, the General

Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC) passed a resolution titled “Calling for the Support of H.R. 676 – Single Payer National Health Care Reform to Advance Health Equity for All and to Eliminate Health Disparities.” Additionally, the 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted in both the House of Bishops and House of Deputies to work for Single-Payer Health Care. Since 1992, the United Methodist Church has supported “advocating for health care for all in the United States by focusing on a single-payer national health plan.”

This bulletin insert courtesy of the Synod of the Northeast, Presbyterian Church (USA)

What About the President’s Healthcare Proposal?



While Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Congregationalists and United Methodists have gone on record through their various assemblies to support and recommend a single-payer healthcare system, President Obama set a different direction as he addressed the nation on healthcare on September 9, 2009. Rather than dropping the for-profit insuring of healthcare, the President recommends regulating and supplementing the current system so that it would fulfill the two goals of 1) protecting the health coverage of Americans who are already covered, and 2) provide healthcare for the nearly fifty million people who are without medical coverage. The President suggests, as an alternative to universal, single-payer healthcare, an additional non-profit or public insurance option that will enhance competition, make the market place more responsive to the needs of consumers, and keep costs lower.

While Presbyterians and other Christian denominations have come to the determination that a single-payer healthcare system would be *optimal*, the President hopes to move the country in the direction of what he believes is *possible*.

What you can do as a citizen:

Advocate for the Principle that Healthcare is a Right for All

Your church may organize forums to discuss health care proposals and how faith affects perspectives on policy. Individuals or groups from a congregation may exercise their rights as citizens and communicate with their senators and representatives, making a difference through advocacy. If you want to advocate for a single-payer plan, know that Rep. Anthony Weiner’s single-payer amendment house bill (H.R. 676, an Expanded and Improved Medicare for All) will be introduced in September.

Become familiar with the Stated Clerk’s letter and statement to Congress:

www.pcusa.org/phewa/networks/phn/statedclerkletter0709.pdf

www.pcusa.org/phewa/networks/phn/statedclerkstatement0809.pdf

Read more about single payer healthcare at the website of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP):

www.pnhp.org/facts/single_payer_resources.php