

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. Contact your lawmakers TODAY Contact your lawmakers TODAY by calling the Capitol switchboard at 888/797-8717 and tell them that you are a member of the United Church of Christ. Let them know that any health care proposal must include:
 - Coverage for all persons
 - Access regardless of ability to pay
 - A full set of benefits
 - A choice of physicians and other providers
 - Elimination of racial and ethnic and other health care disparities
 - Waiver of pre-existing condition exclusions without any age limits
 - A public option
2. Organize a delegation of people of faith in your community to visit the local office of your Senators and Congress people while they are home on recess (tentatively scheduled from Aug. 5 to Sept. 6). For information on office locations, go to <usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>.
3. If you are in or near Washington, D.C., plan to attend the Health Care Now! Rally on July 30. Celebrate Medicare's 44th Birthday. For more information on the agenda, housing, and transportation visit <healthcare-now.org>.
4. Plan Jericho Marches in your communities! Lead a march around your church, your state legislature or congressional offices six times and on the seventh time blow horns, ring bells and declare, "Walls of health care injustice — come down!"

People of Faith Make A Difference!

**Don't Put a Period on Health Care:
God is Still Speaking,**

A Pastoral Letter to Members of the United Church of Christ

Don't put a period on health care:
God is still speaking,

The Rev. John H. Thomas
General Minister and President

The Rev. Geoffrey Black
General Minister and President Elect

The Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo
Executive Minister, Justice and Witness Ministries

Barbara T. Baylor, MPH
Minister for Health Care Justice, Justice and Witness Ministries

 God is still speaking,

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



Jesus asked, which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?

He said, "The one who showed him mercy."

Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

— Luke 10:36-37

This familiar story of the Good Samaritan in Luke's Gospel makes a clear case for universal access to health care. Jesus reminds us of what it means to love our neighbor; it means we stop and assist in a caring manner that nurtures the neighbor back to health and wholeness. Persons in need are not to be passed by, nor are they to be left abandoned and ignored by the side of the road. Those who would be caring neighbors cannot rest until proper care and services have been obtained for the ones in need.

The United Church of Christ declares that we must serve God's intent for humankind by being extensions of Jesus' ministry in the world. We have a long history of providing health care through our health and human service ministries, parish nurse programs, etc. Where the church is involved in healing ministries, we continually seek new ways to enable the liberation of the oppressed and reconciliation of the alienated through acts of love and justice.

All parts of creation deserve to be healed when broken, injured, or sick. All persons regardless of race, ethnic origin, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, income, legal status, health status or geographical location deserve to be tenderly touched by concerned healers.

Health care is not only a basic human right but a human need. As people of faith we believe that it is a moral imperative to transform health care so that it is **inclusive, accessible, affordable and accountable**. We call on our churches to actively work towards the creation of a national health care system and to affirm the moral and justice imperatives of equal access for all people.

Over 47 million people (one in six) and over 9 million children are without health coverage and 25 million more are under-insured. The number of Americans going without or delaying needed medical care has increased sharply between 2003 and 2007. Every year, 18,000 people in the United States die from a lack of health insurance — that's two people every hour.

People of faith are called to engage in the work of transforming our nation's health care system into a just and compassionate system of healing. Where political and market-driven forces have failed, the faith community can proclaim that health care for all is the mark of a just and compassionate society. We have the power to change the conversation and envision a society where each person is afforded health, wholeness, and human dignity.

Just one month ago, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ adopted a Resolution entitled *An Urgent Call For Advocacy in Support of Healthcare For All, as in H.R. 676*. While we as a denomination believe that a single-payer plan is what is needed to truly have universal coverage which is our moral and justice imperative, we acknowledge that it will probably not be the health care proposal of choice. However, we must support a strong public plan option that provides meaningful access to all. The health care proposal must include essential criteria, which are listed on the last page under "Here's what you can do."

The UCC participated in the Faith Leaders Summit on Health Care, held July 7 in Washington, D.C. There we agreed:

No longer can we afford to squander the hopes and dreams of the American people through a much-too-costly system that contributes to economic despair. Families and individuals must be able to rely on affordable care in times of illness or accident and preventative care to safeguard health and well-being. Those who are ill need the assurance that coverage will not be canceled by illness or employment circumstance. They should also be afforded the dignity of selecting their own caregivers.

We insist that legislation be passed by the fall of 2009 by the 111th Congress.

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