



Action Alert!

Celebrate Independence Day and
Help Reform Health Care



"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

U.S. Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776

The famous phrase is based on the writings of English writer John Locke, who expressed that "no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions."



"Our approach to health care is shaped by a simple but fundamental principle: 'Every person has a right to adequate health care. This right flows from the sanctity of human life and the dignity that belongs to all human persons, who are made in the image of God.'"

U.S. Catholic Bishops, A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform: Protecting Human Life, Promoting Human Dignity, Pursuing the Common Good (1993)



Brief Update: Congress has begun considering health care reform legislation. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension (HELP) Committee is marking up a bill and is considering amendments. The Tri-Committee (the House Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, and Education and Labor Committees) introduced a bill, held hearings and is expected to begin marking up the bill soon. The Senate Finance Committee is expected to introduce a bi-partisan health care reform bill any day. Your help is needed during the July 4th recess to tell your congresspersons what to include in—and keep out of—health care reform (see specific asks on page 2).

Catholic Social Teaching and Health Care

In our Catholic tradition, health care is a basic human right. Access to health care should not depend on where a person works, how much a family earns, or where a person lives. Instead, every person, created in the image and likeness of God, has a right to life and to those things necessary to sustain life, including affordable, quality health care. This teaching is rooted in the biblical call to heal the sick and to serve "the least of these," our concern for human life and dignity, and the principle of the common good. Unfortunately, tens of millions of Americans do not have health insurance. According to the Catholic bishops of the United States, the current health care system is in need of fundamental reform. To learn about Catholic teaching on health care in more detail, read the full statement by the United States Catholic Bishops, *A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform*, at usccb.org/sdwp/national/comphealth.shtml.

Facts about the Uninsured

- One out of three Americans under the age of 65 went without health insurance for some period of time during 2007 and 2008. Of these, four out of five were from working families.
- Sixty-four percent of the uninsured are employed full-time, year-round.
- An estimated 14,000 persons a day are now losing coverage as a result of the recession.²
- The poor are more likely to be uninsured. Thirty-four percent of non-elderly persons below the poverty line are uninsured, compared to twenty-one percent of non-elderly persons earning two to three times the poverty line.⁶



Help Reform Health Care



Prayer for the Uninsured

Father of goodness and love,
Hear our prayers for the uninsured members of
our community and for all who are in need.

For those who seek care but find that it is out
of reach, may they find consolation in your
healing presence.

For all who are blessed with health and
security, may they strive to fulfill the needs of
those who are sick and insecure.

For leaders who make decisions that affect the
health and well-being of others, may they work
to ensure the fundamental right to health care.

We ask this through Christ our Lord who
healed those who believed.
Amen.

How One Community Responded

Of the over 46 million Americans currently without access to health care, over a million live in Tennessee. Recognizing that access to health care is a major obstacle for too many people in their state, concerned citizens have worked to address this issue through the Tennessee Health Care Campaign (THCC), an organization which receives funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD).



One THCC victor was expanded coverage for children.

THCC empowers those without access to health care to advocate for expanded and improved health care. Recent victories have included greater coverage for children, assistance for low-income persons, and improvements in patients' rights in hospitals.

How *You* Can Respond

- **Meet with your members of Congress at home over the 4th of July recess or call Members on July 7 and 8** (find your Representative and Senators at house.gov and senate.gov; Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3121) and tell them health care reform should:
 - ⇒ Include health care coverage for all people from conception until natural death, and continue the federal ban on funding for abortions;
 - ⇒ Include access for all with a special concern for the poor;
 - ⇒ Pursue the common good and preserve pluralism, including freedom of conscience; and
 - ⇒ Restrain costs and apply costs equitably among payers.
- **Partner with a local group** funded by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), a Catholic Charities affiliate, or a local Catholic Health Association (CHA) member that is working on health care reform. Also view CHA's new video, "I Can't Wait for Health Care Reform," at www.chausa.org
- **Visit the JPHD Resources on Health Care Reform page for:**
 - ⇒ Statement of Bishop William Murphy, Chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, to the U.S. Senate Finance Committee
 - ⇒ Church teaching on health care reform
 - ⇒ Background on health care reform
 - ⇒ Prayer and Liturgy resourcesAccess these resources at: usccb.org/sdwp/national/health1.shtml.

Sign up to be informed about future issues and alerts! Visit usccb.org/sdwp/takeaction.shtml

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