



National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 800, New York, NY 10115-0050 ■ www.ncccusa.org
Office of the General Secretary ■ P: 212-870-2025 ■ F: 212-870-3112 ■ E: mkinnamon@ncccusa.org

August 14, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

For more than two decades the health care system in America has been spinning out of control leaving more than 45 million people without coverage and placing an unsustainable economic burden on employers and families alike. The current attempt to reform health care is now in jeopardy of being victimized by narrow political interests. Your voice is needed in this moment if meaningful health care reform is to be achieved.

We are writing to you today because we believe the Christian community can and must play a responsible role in this moment of national debate. Working together we can give voice to an insistence that reform efforts must go forward for the well being of all Americans.

Containment of costs is essential to the long term success of any reform effort and must be the first principle of such an effort. In addition to economic sustainability, health care reform must honor patient choice in the selection of doctors and services, and be accessible to all irrespective of employment status or pre-existing health conditions. These factors--affordability, access and quality--must be the hallmarks of the reform we seek. Health and wholeness in our communities cannot be achieved piecemeal nor can access to health care be regarded as the privilege of some.

The means by which health care reform is to be obtained will need to reflect the diversity of American life. Private and public resources both must be marshaled to address the health needs of our community. Members of Congress, now on recess in their home districts, must learn of the deep commitment of churches and Christians that all of God's children need and deserve the best quality of health care of which our society is capable.

Join us in these days in advocating for an equitable and sustainable health care system in this land. The attached primer outlines the ways you can witness to your faith in striving for the well being of all. One of the best known parables of Jesus is that of the Good Samaritan who does not ignore the obvious plight of a wounded stranger in desperate need of health care. In his teaching, Jesus commends the Samaritan for his refusal to "pass by on the other side".

In Jesus' name and for his sake, let us too bring our voices into this fierce debate and in doing so offer a word of counsel that seeks the health and healing of individuals and of our nation. Will you join us in this witness to the Christ who still brings Good News to all? We pray that you will act today to lend your voice to health care reform and that you will know God's presence every step of the way.

In hope and faith,



Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary



Archbishop Vicken Aykazian
President



Deborah L. Patterson, Co Chair
NCC Health Task Force



Josselyn Bennett, Co Chair
NCC Health Task Force