



ELEVATING FAITH-INSPIRED VOICES IN SUPPORT OF
AFFORDABLE QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

December 2008

**A Sign-On Letter from National Faith Communities
in support of comprehensive, compassionate and sustainable health care reform**

Dear President-Elect Obama,

Congratulations on your election to serve as our next President! We have heard your message of hope for our country's transformation and affirm your vision of a future in which all who live in the United States will be blessed by the abundance which has been granted to us.

As you prepare to address the complexities of health care reform, we are writing to share our vision for a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us. This vision arises from values common to the beliefs and practices of our diverse faith communities. It provides common ground around which those with opposing political ideologies may dialogue about how to achieve comprehensive, compassionate and sustainable reform.

Our Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care

As people of faith, we envision a society where each person is afforded health, wholeness, and human dignity. That vision embraces a system of health care that is inclusive, accessible, affordable, and accountable.

Vision – Inclusive: Health care is a basic human right and human need which includes every person. All human beings are created equal, with a divine will that we live together as an inclusive community. Therefore, we are called to treat one another with dignity and compassion, with particular concern for those who are most vulnerable. This mandates acting on our concern for the well-being of every person, including the provision of needed health care for the sake of the common good.

Vision – Accessible: All persons should have access to health services that provide necessary care and contribute to wellness. Humanity is sacred and all persons should benefit from those actions which contribute to our health and wholeness. Therefore, we are called to act with justice and, love, to ensure that all of us have access to the health care we need in order to live out the fullness of our potential both as individuals and as contributing members of our society. We must work together to identify and overcome all barriers to and disparities in such care.

FAITHFUL REFORM IN HEALTH CARE

3000 Euclid Avenue • Cleveland OH 44115-2418 • 216-325-0010 • walling@faithfulreform.org • www.faithfulreform.org

Vision – Affordable: Health care must contribute to the common good by being affordable for individuals, families and society as a whole. In the sacred act of creation, we are endowed with the talents, wisdom and abundant resources necessary to meet the needs of one another, including the health care needs of all. Therefore, in our calling to be faithful stewards, we understand our responsibility to use our health care resources effectively, to administer them efficiently, and to distribute them with equity.

Vision – Accountable: Our health care system must be accountable, offering a quality, equitable and sustainable means of keeping us healthy as individuals and as a community. As spiritual and sacred vessels, we are responsible for the care of our bodies to the best of our ability and to care for one another regardless of individual circumstances. Therefore, individuals, families, governments, businesses, and the faith community are called to work in partnership for a system that ensures fully-informed, timely, quality and safe care that treats body, mind and spirit.

Our Ask

We urge you to lead with these values, and to consider them in every forthcoming health policy initiative – whether it is increased Medicaid assistance in a new economic stimulus package, the reauthorization of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, or a proposal for system overhaul. The electorate, the people in our faith communities, said with urgent certainty that health care reform must be a priority for you and your Administration. In the midst of the economic uncertainties of our nation, we implore you to recognize how much health care contributes to the economic distress felt by millions of people in our country every day.

Our Commitment

As we share this vision with you and urge you to provide leadership on this issue, we also pledge ourselves to work with you to make health care reform a reality. Because we understand that the path to reform is not clear, and that competing priorities, massive deficits, and political realities will make any effort for reform challenging, we commit to educating, inspiring and empowering the members in our various faith communities to support a health care future that is grounded in these shared values.

We will help build bridges with those who see a different health care future, and will promote policy options that contribute to the common good. We will stand with you in support of proposals that call for a health care system that we believe is inclusive, accessible, affordable and accountable.

And, we will pray for you and our nation, that together we may create a society in which every person is afforded health, wholeness and human dignity.

Sincerely,

Buddhist Peace Fellowship
Church Women United
Disciples Center for Public Witness
Disciples Justice Action Network
Equal Partners in Faith
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Evangelicals for Social Action
International Parish Nurse Resource Center
Islamic Medical Association of North America
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Episcopal Health Ministries
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Network of Spiritual Progressives
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office
Union for Reform Judaism
United Black Christians of the United Church of Christ
United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society

Contact information:

Rev. Linda Hanna Walling
Executive Director
Faithful Reform in Health Care
Email: walling@faithfulreform.org
Cell phone: 216-548-3125