

U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Statement on Healthcare Reform September, 2009

Statement

Compelled by the gospel of Jesus and our mission to respond to the “dear neighbor” without distinction, the U.S. Federation of the Sisters of St. Joseph Leadership Council and (Congregation/Province), adds its voice to that of NETWORK, a Catholic Social Justice lobby, in support of health care reform. We believe that access to affordable, quality healthcare is a basic human right and a fundamental social good for all persons. The current state of health care in the United States constitutes social sin that must be eradicated through broad and deep engagement of the public conscience. We advocate for a healthcare system that is:

- **Accessible to everyone in the United States**
- **Affordable, funded and administered in a simple, direct way**
- **Comprehensive, including preventative, primary, acute, long-term, and hospice care**
- **Quality, including care that is culturally appropriate.**

Impact on Women and children

As the economy worsens, many employers are forced to reduce healthcare coverage for dependents, leaving millions of women and children at risk. Also, women are less likely to get health insurance through their jobs because they are more likely to work part-time, work in small businesses that don't provide any insurance, or they are full-time caregivers for their children. In many states, insurance companies can still discriminate because of gender, denying coverage because of pre-existing conditions such as having a C-section, having had a baby, or having been a victim of domestic violence.

Talking Points:

- **Healthcare is a social good for our country. It is a right for every individual to have access to quality, affordable healthcare.** The following are critical: adequate supports for those who are unable to pay for health insurance either through an expansion of Medicaid or through subsidies for private insurance premiums, i.e. public option; a limit on patient out-of-pocket costs and no financial cap on benefits; affordable coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions and immigrants; healthcare that is portable.
- **Quality healthcare for everyone is needed in our country.** Medical services need to be integrated into a holistic system that has the patient at the center of concern. Physicians need to be encouraged to work in primary care practices through funding and other incentives in order to have a “medical home” for all patients.
- **We must have systemic cost controls for individuals, families, businesses and government.** The funding for healthcare needs to be based on the actual health needs of an individual and not the number of services that a medical staff can provide. Medical procedures must be based on best practices and quality medicine, and not a profit motive. Federal regulation of the insurance industry is required in order to limit the cost of administration to a small percentage of the total cost for the provision of healthcare. If it is not possible to adequately regulate the insurance industry at the federal level, then a “public option” or “Medicare for all who want it” is the alternative for controlling costs through competition.

Action Steps:

- Stay informed on the health care issue as it moves through Congress.
- Use the above talking points to call and write your Senators and Representative.
- NETWORK offers current, updated analysis on the issue and action alerts -www.networklobby.org
- For more information, visit <http://www.usccb.org/healthcare/>

The statement and talking points reflect information from NETWORK. Used with permission.