

Healthcare Policy Principles



More than 45 million Americans— disproportionately African-Americans, Hispanics and the working poor— are uninsured. As a result, they lack ready access to care, which causes unnecessary deaths, increases morbidity among the acutely and chronically ill and results in higher costs. This situation is immoral and intolerable.

As an Anabaptist Christian community, we believe that a biblically-compatible healthcare system will:

- celebrate God's generous provision of resources, assuring enough for everyone when shared equitably by all;
- promote the flourishing of the whole community, including each of its members;
- protect the well-being of the weakest and most vulnerable members of society,
- cultivate stewardship of God's resources.

We confess our own failure to act consistently upon these values. We commit ourselves, by God's grace, to do so more faithfully. We also call upon the U.S. Congress to support bipartisan legislation that assures access without barriers to affordable, basic, quality healthcare for all. Specifically, we urge Congress to:

Support a healthcare system in which risks, costs and responsibility are shared by all

There is enough for all, if all share healthcare resources, recognize limits and seek to be caretakers of health. We can learn from the experience of countries with exemplary records of assuring access and controlling costs. In these countries, healthcare is seen as a human or social right that helps bind a society together. Those with means help to shoulder the cost for those without, and costs are controlled with cooperative bargaining power.

Eliminate financial and health status as barriers to healthcare access

Our faith tradition teaches us that special care is to be extended to the weakest and most vulnerable members of society. Healthcare for all joins the United States with all other developed countries in providing basic, affordable healthcare for all.

Strengthen public health systems in order to help create healthy communities

In order to effect long-term improvement in our nation's overall health, increasing access to healthcare must go hand in hand with improving public health and reducing poverty. Public health measures will help eliminate unhealthy environmental factors, provide education and incentives for healthy life-style choices and inform the public about the effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare measures.

Support and strengthen public insurance programs for vulnerable populations while comprehensive reform is being enacted

Programs such as Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) currently provide health coverage for more than 50 million individuals— including children and adults in low-income families, the elderly and the disabled. Still, many people who need coverage do not qualify and many states and programs don't cover needed services.

Openly address issues of quality, efficiency and limits

The quality of healthcare delivery is profoundly uneven— even for those with insurance— and sizable healthcare costs are due to advertising, administration and redundant tests. No system can afford to give everyone every medical procedure or treatment that they want or from which they might benefit.