

January 28, 2010

**THE
CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION**
OF THE UNITED STATES

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and related organizations, I wanted to express our agreement with the President's reaffirmation in his State of the Union address of the priority of health care reform and urge you to continue working toward final passage of a comprehensive health reform bill this year.



As a longtime advocate of health reform, CHA and its members are committed to creating a health care system that ensures everyone will get the health care they need, when they need it. The 47 million individuals without insurance, the 16 million individuals who are underinsured, and the insured who have trouble affording their current coverage are all in desperate need of improvements to our health care system. It has been clear for many years now that fundamental, comprehensive reform of the health care system is not merely a financial or political issue, but a moral imperative as well. We commend Congress for all your efforts over the past year on behalf of those failed by the current system, and urge you to bring those efforts to fruition as quickly as possible.

We understand the political realities and concerns with passage of such important and far-reaching legislation. But we firmly believe that now is not the time to let those concerns derail what may be the last opportunity of our lifetime to address the continuing shame of allowing so many individuals and families in our nation to go without access to affordable health care. For all of us who have worked so hard to make health reform a reality, we have come too close to that goal to give up on it now.

The costs of inaction are too dire to allow that possibility. According to the non-partisan Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's September 2009 study, a failure to enact any health reform legislation during the current Congress would ultimately lead to an increase in the number of uninsured in every state by at least 10 percent by 2019; an increase in health insurance premiums of more than 60 percent in 46 states; an increase in every state in Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) spending by more than 75 percent; and a doubling in uncompensated care costs in at least 45 states. While the status quo in our nation's health system remains unacceptable, just imagine the consequences of allowing inaction at this time to make a bad situation infinitely worse for future generations.

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We urge you to put the needs of our nation's people above political interests and partisan concerns, and continue to work for comprehensive health reform this year. As Congress considers the options for moving forward, we also reaffirm this urgent priority among our health ministry and pledge to work alongside those who will continue in good faith to achieve this goal. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or a member of CHA's advocacy staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Carol Keehan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sr. Carol Keehan, DC
President and CEO