



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

October 2015

ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR EVERYONE IMPLEMENTING AND IMPROVING THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

THE ISSUE

As a matter of human dignity, everyone is entitled to health care. Like any basic element of life, health care sustains us and should always be accessible and affordable for everyone—where they need it, when they need it, no exceptions and no interruptions.

In 2014, there were approximately 41 million uninsured individuals in the U.S., and many of them are in working families. The consequences of being uninsured are significant. Because uninsured patients do not receive the right care in the right place, they are up to four times as likely as insured patients to require avoidable hospitalizations and emergency care.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) takes a significant step toward expanding access to health insurance coverage and improving our delivery system, but more work needs to be done.

MINISTRY TRADITION

Our mission, in accordance with Catholic social teaching and values, calls us to serve as advocates for everyone, particularly the poor and other vulnerable populations. We believe that health care is a basic human right. To that end, health care should be considered an essential building block for a just and free society, just as education is. As the Catholic health ministry, we are committed to moving the nation toward a more just and equitable health care system that ensures health care for everyone.

CHA'S POSITION AND ACTIVITIES

In early 2008 CHA released *Our Vision for U.S. Health Care*, establishing our principles for health care reform and derived from our core values: human dignity; concern for the poor and vulnerable; justice; common good; stewardship; and pluralism.

■ Principles For Health Care Reform

- Available and accessible to everyone, paying special attention to the poor and vulnerable;
- Health and prevention oriented, with the goal of enhancing the health status of communities;
- Sufficiently and fairly financed;
- Transparent and consensus-driven, in allocation of resources, and organized for cost-effective care and administration;
- Patient centered, and designed to address health needs at all stages of life, from conception to natural death; and
- Safe, effective and designed to deliver the greatest possible quality

The Catholic health ministry continues to advocate for a health care system that serves everyone. During the 113th Congress, we will work to:

- **ACA Funding**—Ensure adequate funding for full implementation of the health care law in accordance with CHA’s *Vision*
- **ACA Implementation**—Ensure that health insurance exchanges, Medicaid coverage expansion and insurance reforms achieve the promise of coverage and high-quality integrated care for millions of uninsured individuals through outreach, enrollment and education efforts
- **Delivery System**—Support policies to improve the current delivery system and reduce costs, including health technology; telemedicine; care coordination; and prevention and wellness
- **Coverage Expansion**—Continue to expand health care access and coverage, inducing coverage for undocumented immigrants
- **Access and Quality**—Improve quality and access to care, especially behavioral health care and palliative care services, and facilitate care integration and coordination throughout all settings
- **Availability of Care**—Ensure the availability of care in underserved areas by increasing the number of primary care physicians, advance practice clinicians and mental health providers, and by supporting critical access hospitals