



Pray for Health Care Reform

*Father of goodness and love,
hear our prayers for the uninsured and underinsured members of our community
and for all who are in need.*

*For those who seek care but find that it is out of reach,
may they find consolation in your healing presence.*

*For all who are blessed with health and security,
may they work to fulfill the needs of those who are sick and insecure.*

*For leaders who make decisions that affect the health and well-being of others,
may they strive to ensure the fundamental right to health care.*

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

On May 5, the President released more details of his budget. In regard to health care: *The President's fiscal year 2010 budget proposal would increase overall spending and make several significant policy changes to promote sustainability, efficiency, and quality. The budget establishes a reserve fund of \$600 billion to start health care reform.*

The **United States Catholic Conference of Bishops** appreciates the significant commitment of resources set aside in the president's budget to reform the **health care** system and expand needed health care coverage. They strongly urge that Congress directs these resources to provide health care for all and assures that reform protects and enhances life and does not threaten nor diminish it. (March 26, 2009 letter to Congress)



Catholic Charities USA's Position



The lack of affordable health care presents a complex set of problems for many low and moderate-income families. Families that cannot afford health insurance, or lack access to proper health care, often do not receive preventive medicine and/or regular care. These families are more likely to miss work and school, making it more difficult for such families to maintain steady employment and move toward economic security.

A nation that continues to be as prosperous as America, despite our recent economic misfortunes, must enact fundamental reforms that will provide for an efficient and quality health care system ensuring the well-being of all, especially the most vulnerable amongst us.

Catholic Charities USA Urges Congress to:

- Enact comprehensive health care policies that ensure equitable, accessible, affordable, and quality health care for all that safeguards human life from conception until natural death;
- Improve health literacy and education;
- Focus on preventative care;
- Restrain health care costs with responsible financing and cost-sharing;
- Strengthen the Medicaid safety net for low-income persons;

- Expand mental health coverage for the poor and vulnerable by sufficiently funding mental health and substance abuse programs administered by The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and
- Ensure key health care protection for children in very low-income families.

Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio

St. Noel's Health Care Task Force worked with the Diocesan Social Action Office in designing a Health Care Reform Dialog.

goal was to bring the concept of health care reform to prominence as the most important domestic issue for the next President and Congress, and participants to invest themselves in establishing the principles, values, goals for a successful American Health Care System.



Our
for
and

VALUES & PRINCIPLES:

- **Human Dignity - found in each individual throughout the life span.** Each life is sacred and needs care from prenatal stages to the end of life. No one should be stigmatized or ashamed. Each person should respect his own body and make healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Social Justice - Health care is a basic human right. Each person deserves equal access to high quality affordable health care.** No one should be excluded from care or impoverished by medical bills. There is always room for charity, but charity cannot substitute for national policy. Examine the causes of injustice, and change the offending conditions.
- **Concern for All, especially the Poor and Vulnerable** - The growing child, the injured, the sick, the chronically ill, the stranger, the homeless, the lost, and the aged, are vulnerable. The poor, the uneducated, and those without choices, require our advocacy and care. Often, these people are nearly invisible, and so is their suffering and death. Societal challenges impact health. Healthcare providers must be prepared to serve anyone who comes through the doors, whether citizen or visitor, according to their needs.
- **Community and the Common Good**- Each person's health affects not only himself, but also his family, his employer, and his community as a whole.
- **Social Responsibility** – Each must give according to his blessings to provide for the common good and advocate for those in need. We must love and care for one another. We rise or fall as a community.
- **Stewardship of Resources** – Each must be diligent in the use of public resources. Design the most effective and efficient ways to accomplish goals.

To hold a forum in your parish, visit www.catholic-action.org for a script and materials.

St. Noel's still posts a Health Care Reform Dialog online for people of faith to use alone or with a group. www.stnoel.org/sc/HealthCare.htm

For more information, visit www.usccb.org, www.catholiccharitiesusa.org, and www.catholic-action.org.

Health Care: More details.

The President's fiscal year 2010 budget proposal would increase overall spending and make several significant policy changes to promote sustainability, efficiency, and quality. The budget establishes a reserve fund of \$600 billion to start health care reform.

Medicaid: The President's budget estimates that it will spend \$290 billion in FY 2010, an increase of \$27 billion over FY 2009. An estimated 53 million individuals including children, the elderly, and the disabled will be covered under Medicaid. Over the next five years, the budget proposals call for a slow in annual growth from 4.4 percent to 4.3 percent, a savings of \$22 billion over 10 years. These changes aim to increase the efficiency and accountability, as well as contribute to the health care reserve fund. Medicaid is a mandatory program that provides medical assistance to low-income individuals.

SCHIP: The budget requests \$10 billion for FY 2010, \$1.5 billion more than FY 2009. The 2009 reauthorization of The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) provides an additional \$44 billion over the next five years. This increase is expected to cover an additional four million eligible children for a total of 12 million children by FY 2013. The new law provides incentives to states to sign up eligible children, requires dental benefits and mental health parity in all SCHIP plans, and eliminates the five year waiting period for legal immigrant pregnant women and children. SCHIP provides health insurance coverage to low-income children whose families earn too much to be eligible for Medicaid, yet do not earn enough for private health insurance.

SAMHSA: The budget requests \$3.5 billion for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), an increase of \$59 million from FY 2009 spending. The budget calls for a \$43 million increase for substance abuse prevention and treatment activities and a \$17 million increase for the prevention and treatment of mental illness. It includes \$68 million, an increase of \$8 million, for the PATH Homeless Formula Grant, which is a flexible funding stream that allows local programs to tailor grant funds to their communities to assist in the transition from homelessness.

Children's Mental Health Services: The budget provides \$125 million for children's mental health services, an increase of \$17 million.

Medicare: The President's budget estimates spending \$510 billion on Medicare benefits in FY 2010, a \$19 billion increase from FY 2009. Medicare is expected to provide coverage to 47 million individuals including the elderly, disabled, and those with end-stage renal disease. The budget includes a series of proposals designed to promote quality, efficiency, and cost-sharing. These proposals are expected to contribute \$287.5 billion over 10 years to the reserve fund.