

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN CARE ABOUT HEALTHCARE TOO

When Jesus walked the earth, he showed how much he cared for his brothers and sisters through his response to their pain and suffering. He healed the blind and the bleeding and he urged people to heal themselves and to care for each other.

The Good Samaritan was the primary example of Jesus' message about healthcare - basically that the good man, the one who does the will of the Father, provides healthcare for everyone, even the stranger. The victim had been ravaged by a gang of thieves and left for dead. And how does the good Samaritan respond? According to Jesus, he stopped his busy traveling schedule to personally put oil on the wounds of the ravaged man and give him healing water to drink - then he wrapped his wounds and put him on his own donkey and got him to the nearest facility where he could be cared for and provided his own money to be sure that the best of care was provided to this wounded stranger. He didn't expect any reward or profit from this act. He was doing the work of compassion and caring, the work of the Lord.

Our nation is ravaged at this moment by a healthcare system that does not provide healthcare to millions, does not care, and is defined by greed. About one hundred million of our people are in the position of the wounded man by the side of the road, beaten and robbed by thieves and left to die. Jesus' message to the young ruler who wanted to trick him was that those who would do the will of God must leave aside their rush to the next appointment and stop to provide healthcare with personal caring and with the sharing of their wealth - even for the total stranger.

Our nation is about to enter into a great debate. The question in its most simple form is this. Will we continue to have a profit-driven system that provides hundreds of billions of dollars in wealth to the healthcare industrial complex - the drug and insurance corporations - or will we provide a non-profit system that covers everybody with that money. The debate is over whether we should give more public and family money to the insurance and drug companies or whether we should use that money for healthcare. It is a matter of priorities. United Methodist policy says "Yes" to Jesus' mandate that we move to a caring non-profit system that uses our money to cover everybody, not for profits, but for a single payer system that provides guaranteed quality healthcare for all.

The good news is that we can have a much better quality healthcare system for everybody in this country and help others around the world begin to deal with this same issue. And we can do it while spending no more money than we are now spending. It may be surprising to hear that about one-third of every dollar we now spend on the healthcare system is wasted on excess administrative costs, advertising and CEO salaries. That comes to almost \$300 billion a year that would cover all of the uninsured as well as the anxiously and barely insured and provide much better benefits for all of us. A single payer system includes mental healthcare, drug and alcohol

treatment, all hospital and medical care, dental, optical and hearing care and equipment, pharmaceutical drugs, and long term care.

The good news is that, with the money we are now spending, we could do all of this if we moved to a single payer system (something like an enhanced and improved Medicare for All). It would cost us no more money to have a single payer system and yet the benefits would be ten times better. It is also good business to remove the unnecessary middle man costs from this essential system. Our church agencies, our businesses and our non-profits would be able to provide more and better services if they didn't have the healthcare financing burden hanging around their necks. Families would have no co-payments, deductibles and denials to face when they get sick. And most of all, it is the compassionate and loving thing for us to do.

During the month of April, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Healthcare Month - these are some of the things you can do to help move the toward a real national healthcare system for all:

Visit your Member of Congress as a part of your celebration of Passover and Easter. He or she will be home in your Congressional District the first two weeks of April.

Take a colorful and diverse delegation including doctors and nurses, business leaders, workers, and members of your congregation to be sure your Congress member understands that this is something that must receive his/her attention now, not later after the next election.

Tell your Congress Member that you want him/her to endorse H.R. 676, the only bill in Congress that calls for a non-profit single-payer national healthcare system that won't cost more money. Remind your Member that the American people voted strongly for healthcare for all in the fall elections, and that we expect Congress to move forward on the promises they made during the campaign that they were going to work to heal the healthcare crisis in our land.

Read the Good Samaritan parable with new eyes - eyes that see it as a guide for the kind of 21st Century healthcare system we really need here and around the world, healthcare for everybody.

More information: [www.Healthcare-NOW.org](http://www.healthcare-now.org) <<http://www.healthcare-now.org/>> .
1-800-453-1305; info@healthcare-now.org, or the Physicians for a National Health Plan: www.pnhp.org <<http://www.pnhp.org/>>