

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) CALLS FOR SINGLE PAYER

Resolution to Endorse HR 676

WHEREAS the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its predecessors have through the years called for reform of health delivery systems in the United States to make them accessible to the entire population.

WHEREAS the 1971 General Assembly of the UPUSA called for a national health insurance “single payer” plan with the following words:

We find that our society is giving highest priority to the production and consumption of goods and to profit-making and the defense of wealth to the neglect of basic human needs including health.

We believe that good health is of the nation’s most valuable resources, important not only to the well-being of individuals but also to the nation....We believe the general public has direct responsibilities in redesigning and developing a comprehensive, publicly-oriented national health policy.

Therefore, the General Assembly recommends: There be developed a national policy leading to a comprehensive system of health care which shall:

- A. Be accountable to the general public.
- B. Make all services and benefits available to all persons in the United States.
- C. Be administered by a single national health agency with power to enforce standards to provide the highest quality health care possible.

The Delivery of Health Services

- A. We believe that the value of persons requires that each person have full access to essential services without regard to ability to pay and on terms that enhance the dignity of the individuals....
- B. We find our medical system to be preoccupied with disease and crisis care, which is costly in lives, social relationships, and money...
 - C. Therefore, the 183rd General Assembly (1971) recommends that:
 - i. Comprehensive health care for all persons include at least these elements: and in growth and development, nutrition, prevention of illness, periodic diagnostic evaluation, treatment of disease, extended and home nursing care, rehabilitation, long term care for chronic disorders, and the appropriate social and economic provisions to make these feasible in the life of a person and his household.

WHEREAS the negative conditions that resulted in the 1971 and subsequent General Assembly pronouncements have multiplied in recent years so that now almost 50 million persons are uninsured, another 50 million are underinsured, and still another 50 million are at risk to be uninsured because of the gradual collapse of employment-based insurance plans; while per capita annual health costs are higher than in any other country and yet the U.S. ranks only 13th amongst industrialized countries in quality of health care; while administrative costs are many times

higher under managed care systems than in single payer systems such as the Medicare and Veterans Administration systems, while for the current per capita expenditure, the entire populace could be covered through a single payer system, including mental health and dental care without co-pays and deductibles.

WHEREAS we now have before the U.S. Congress a bill – HR 676 – that calls for single payer national health insurance and that embraces many of the principles set forth in our General Assembly pronouncements.

WHEREAS health care for the general population and for specific groups within the population as always been a concern of PHEWA and of all the PHEWA networks.

BE IT RESOLVED that:

PHEWA endorse HR 676, a single payer, “Medicare for all,” publicly funded, privately administered national health insurance program.

PHEWA work toward endorsement of HR 676 by the General Assembly of the PC(USA).

PHEWA encourage interfaith and ecumenical cooperation with the goal of obtaining passage of HR 676 by the congress and its signing by the President.

PHEWA send a copy of this resolution to Congressman John Conyers (D-MI), to the appropriate committee chairs of the U.S. Congress, and to the Stated Clerk, the Executive Director of the General Assembly Council, the Washington and United Nations offices, the Advisory Council on Social Witness Policy of the Presbyterian Church (USA)