

# ◆ For the Healing of the Nation ◆

## The Gamaliel Foundation and Religious Leaders Call for Health Care Reform

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness ..... So God created humankind in God’s image, in the image of God they were created, male and female God created them.”

(Genesis 1:26a, 27)

“The right of every individual to adequate health care flows from the sanctity of human life and that dignity belongs to all human beings... We believe that health is a fundamental human right which has as its prerequisites social justice and equality and that it should be equally available and accessible to all.

”Imam Sa’dullah Khan, The Islamic Center of Southern California

“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?”

(Jeremiah 8:22)

“Health is not a luxury, nor should it be the sole possession of a privileged few. We are all created b’tzelem elohim – in the image of God – and this makes each human life as precious as the next.”

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Past President, Union of American Hebrew Congregations

“Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. . . Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.”

(Matthew 9:35,10:1)

### 1. We profess

every person is created in the image of God and shares in the inherent dignity of being created by God: body, mind and spirit. Health and wholeness is a gift from God intended for all God’s people;

when those in religious, economic or political power deny this inherent dignity to God’s people, the prophets of God speak out, calling for justice and a return to God’s way;

Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, and other great religious leaders were healers as well as prophets. A faithful tradition of healing restores to community those who have been marginalized by illness, renews a rightful relationship with God and neighbor, challenges unjust systems, and seeks healing and wholeness for all who are in need.

---

## **2. We affirm**

religious communities in the United States that have founded hospitals, clinics, and medical schools;

the witness of people of faith, past and present, confronting and challenging those in power when injustice and inequality exist;

physicians, dentists, nurses, technicians, healers, therapists, chaplains, mental health workers and others who are dedicated to bring healing and comfort;

health care-givers who endure stress and frustration caused by the complexities of our present health system;

that our faith calls us to seek healing and wholeness for all in need.

## **3. We deplore**

that over 47 million children, women and men in the United States do not have access to full health care;

that the United States has not found ways to provide access to full health care while most industrialized nations have;

that many families are forced to decide between putting food on the table or buying health insurance for their children, between paying the rent or purchasing essential medicines, while CEOs of major health companies are paid millions of dollars each year and pharmaceutical companies make billions of dollars in profits;

that the extravagant costs of the war in Iraq have exceeded one trillion dollars while resources to invest in people's health are scarce;

that the health care industry in this country has become another means to divide rich and poor, creating greater isolation, fear and despair for many;

the assertion that more competition in the health care industry or greater self-discipline by patients are the best or only ways to lower the high cost of health care;

the fact that many health care resources are being moved from inner-city and inner-suburb neighborhoods into luxury facilities in the exurbs.

---

---

#### **4. We assert**

along with Martin Luther King, Jr., that “injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane form of inequality”;

that the myths of scarcity and isolation need to be replaced with the reality of God’s abundance and the power of community, so that fear will be diminished and hope will rise anew;

that single-payer systems in other countries are far more efficient and cost-effective than our complex and inefficient system;

that the health care crisis can be resolved and all people can have full access to quality health care at affordable cost, that the common good will be served and the health of our communities will be restored.

#### **5. We challenge**

faith communities and all people of good will to provide healing environments for their communities;

faith communities and all people of good will to speak publicly, organize and create coalitions, challenging those with power to make changes in our national health care system, providing full access to health care, ensuring the service of the common good;

public office holders to boldly make changes in our national health care system, providing full access to health care for all people living in these United States.

#### **6. We support the following principles of health care reform**

Health care coverage should be guaranteed to everyone living in the United States.

Health care should be affordable and accessible to all, with special consideration for low income individuals and families.

Health care should be cost-effective and sustainable for society.

Health care should be of high quality for everyone.

Health care coverage should be continuous, regardless of employment status or pre-existing condition.

Health care coverage should be comprehensive, covering all types of illnesses and health conditions, and include preventative care.

---

# ◆ A Guide for Small Group Discussion ◆

## Conversation with one other person:

Think about your own health for a moment, and talk to your conversation partner about the following questions:

1. What things have been most important in supporting your own health?
2. When have you had that support in your life?
3. When have you NOT had that support in your life? What was that like? (If you have always had that support in your life, think of someone you know who hasn't. What impact did that lack of support have on their life?)

## Small group questions:

1. What is the impact on our lives and the lives of our families when there is **not** adequate support for a healthy life?
2. Read the quotes and section 1 ("We Profess") of "For the Healing of the Nation". What are your reactions?
3. In section 3 ("We deplore"), we are reminded that over 47 million people (1 in 7) in the United States do not have full access to adequate health care. Adequate health care is one condition needed for a healthy community. What are other conditions needed for healthy communities?
4. What should the spiritual communities response be to the health care crisis?
5. What is the faith communities role in creating communities of health and wholeness?
6. What other questions/concerns/reactions come to you when you read the Gamaliel statement on health care reform?
7. What will **you** do in response to the crisis in health care in this country? What impact do you want to have? With whom in your place of faith, within your Gamaliel affiliate, will you team?



203 North Wabash Avenue, Suite 808 - Chicago, Illinois 60601  
www.gamaliel.org (312) 357-2639 (phone) (312) 357-6735 (fax) e-mail us at info@gamaliel.org

The Gamaliel Foundation and its affiliates create national issue campaigns to improve life in local neighborhoods and metropolitan regions. These issues grown from grassroots listening campaigns are: Immigration, Healthcare, Transportation, Jobs, and Housing. The Gamaliel Foundation continues to provide its affiliate organizations with tools to train and develop leaders and staff who create powerful statewide and local organizations. In a year when a community organizer has been elected president of the United States, we are proud that President Barak Obama's career as a Community Organizer began with us.