

## **HEALTH CARE REFORM**

### **The Problem**

Prompt action to reform our economically unsustainable and morally unjust health care system is imperative. Proposals for health care reform are expected to emerge at both the state and federal levels. Regardless of what approach gains the most traction as the new Legislature, Congress, and Administration get underway, all proposals must be measured against the following seven moral principles.

### **Legislative Action Needed**

Legislators must ensure that Wisconsin's reformed health care system does the following:

Offers universal access to health care that includes everyone, regardless of their age, gender, medical history, race, genetic background, or ability to pay. We must be especially mindful of those most vulnerable, such as children and those who lack political or economic power.

Is comprehensive and meets the full range of health care needs, including primary, preventive and long-term care, acute care, and treatment for mental illness and alcohol and drug addiction.

Provides high-quality care. Health care is too important a public good not to be good. It must convey a genuine respect for human life and dignity, and ensure quality care for all stages of life.

Ensures the health care system that fair and promotes the common good, not a two-nation system. There must be a fair financing mechanism and costs and burdens must be spread across the entire community. A fair sharing of benefits and burdens binds the community together and ties one generation to the next.

Is responsive to patient needs and preferences. It must provide some measure of freedom to select our doctors, the treatment we receive, and our health care plans. It must engage the patient in preventive, acute, rehabilitative and long-term care, and respect the religious and ethical values of individuals and institutions. It must be portable, so that persons can change jobs without fear of losing their health coverage.

Restraints costs and use our resources wisely. The system must correct the imbalance between our financial investment in health care and our ability to provide a just distribution of services. The system must exercise good stewardship of our community's resources by reducing administrative costs, striving for efficiency, and simplifying the delivery of care.

Is transparent and accountable. Checks and balances are necessary to insure that the powers granted to government and private agencies regarding health care and its financing are not abused, and the decisions made by such agencies must be accountable to the people that they serve and represent. Consumers need to know the actual cost of medical services and procedures.

### **Why?**

People of Faith United for Justice believes that health care is not an optional commodity. Health Care is a fundamental good grounded in the fact that each person is endowed by God with transcendent value. Providing for the health of children – and thus a health care system accessible to all – is part of our covenant with future generations.