



Health Care is a Human Right



WELCOME

We know you agree that now is the time to act and create a health care system that allows all of us access to quality, affordable health care. A campaign is underway that endeavors to create a health system that is guided by human rights principles. It's a provision of the Affordable Care Act and would transform our health care system as we know it.

Welcome to our December Health Care is a Human Right newsletter! Every month, we will keep you up to date on the progress of the campaign.

In this issue you will learn about:

- Choose Your Role
- Beyond Obamacare
- Share Your Story
- News Center

Each month we hear from campaign sponsors and endorsers about why they see health care is a human right as critical from their viewpoint.

Choose Your Role

Jewish tradition teaches that to preserve a soul is to sustain the whole world. According to Judaism, when it comes to health care we have concentric circles of obligation. We must care for our own well-being first ... then attend to our closest circle of family, loved-ones, friends, and neighbors... then move beyond those circles to our larger society.

What we sometimes forget is that we cannot fully help others until we care for ourselves. In our lives we often reverse the concentric circles of obligation. Many of us dedicate our primary energy to healing the world—by speaking truth to power, advocating for change and pursuing justice. Then, we dedicate ourselves tirelessly to our jobs, clocking long hours, working through lunch, not getting a breather all day.

Or we actively care for our families, balancing the logistics of busy lives, ensuring that all our family members are well cared for. At last, we turn inward and intend to take better care of ourselves, to exercise, to eat better, to manage our stress in healthier ways. We say to ourselves we will, one day, if only we could find the time.

In our tradition, God said “I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life, so that you and your children may live.” It may sound like a leap to move from healthy decisions for ourselves to healing the whole world. Yet, especially at this busy time of year, we must remember that when we care for ourselves first, we are then better able to care for others. Our own self-care will energize us to more fervently dedicate ourselves to creating a society where everyone enjoys health and well-being. To paraphrase our Sages, if we do not provide health care coverage for everyone now, then when?

During this busy time of year, may we care for ourselves, our families and our society and thereby sustain the world in blessing and in health.

Rabbi Ruth A. Zlotnick, Temple Beth Am

Beyond Obamacare: How Do We Get to Real Universal Health Coverage?

National Efforts

Rep. John Conyers' bill, HR 676, Expanded and Improved Medicare for All, is still on the table in the House of Representatives. Given the large Republican majority, it is not expected to receive any attention any time soon. Rep. Jim McDermott has filed a bill, HR 3241, that would help states to prepare universal coverage plans, using Sec. 1332 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to apply for waivers and implement plans.

State Efforts

Since Congress doesn't seem to be able to get anything done, attention is moving to states that are working on their own plans for improvement over the ACA. There are four states to notice:

- **Vermont** – Several years ago Vermont passed a law to set up Green Mountain Care, even before the ACA happened. They started with a mandate to cover all residents of Vermont, with Green Mountain Care covering everyone who didn't already have insurance, and then planning to gradually shift others into the plan. It looked as if they would be first in the nation, but then, last December (2014), Gov. Shumlin refused to submit the payment plan to the legislature, claiming it cost too much. There is still argument over whether it really has to cost “too much”, whether the financing plan shunted too much money to hospitals, and how much relief from the payroll tax to give to small businesses initially, since many of them are not offering any health coverage now.
- **New York** – On May 27, 2015, a single-payer universal coverage plan, the New York Health Act, passed in the Democrat-majority Assembly by a large majority. However, the Republicans control the Senate, and the bill is not expected to pass there. The plan would be financed by a progressive income tax as well as a payroll tax, and would provide health coverage to all New Yorkers without any deductibles or co-pays.

- **Colorado** – The ColoradoCareYes campaign just announced on October 23, 2015 that they have submitted over 150,000 signatures on Initiative #20. Only 98,000 need to be valid to assure the initiative a spot on the November ballot in 2016. The ColoradoCare plan would be run by an elected board separate from state government, but able to receive payroll and income tax revenue to pay for health care for all residents of Colorado, with no deductibles and few co-pays. If passed, the bill requires the state to submit a Sec. 1332 waiver under the ACA to replace it with the ColoradoCare plan.
- **Washington** – After failing to qualify as an initiative for the ballot in 2000, the Washington Health Security Trust bill (WHST) has languished in the legislature since 2007. The WHST would set up an appointed board of trustees to run a health coverage plan that would cover all Washington residents. A specific legislative committee would be required to come up with a financing plan – more difficult in Washington due to an extremely regressive taxation system. If the plan is passed by the legislature, it would require the Health Care Authority to prepare and file a Sec. 1332 waiver application so the WHST could replace the ACA.
- **Other States** – Several other states are also working on plans for more inclusive and comprehensive health coverage. Hawaii, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, California, and Oregon are among the total of 20 states with advocacy groups participating in the One Payer States group that met in Chicago Oct 30-Nov. 1, 2015.

Sarah K. Weinberg, MD

What's your story?



Personal Stories

The best way to spread the word about the Health Care is a Human Right campaign is to talk to everyone you know and tell them not just about what the campaign strives to accomplish, but also why YOU care. It's the personal stories that make the difference.

Do you know someone who has suffered because they don't have health insurance? Do you know someone who can't afford to get the coverage they need or can't see a doctor because it's too expensive? These are the types of stories that are more impacting than any other information about the campaign.

Consider having a house party where you tell that stories to your friends and neighbors. Everything you need for a house party can be found in the [Activist Toolkit](#) on the [Health Care is a Human Right Website](#). [The House Meeting Host's Guide](#) will get you started in the right direction.

News Center

Colorado pushes for universal health care that's governed by the people *Co-operative News*

Act, which aimed to increase the quality and affordability of health insurance in America, lower the uninsured rate and reduce costs. The scheme has been beset by problems, with 12 of 23 CO-OPs (consumer operated and oriented plans) set up under 'Obamacare' now set to close by the end of 2015, citing problems with the structure, implementation and regulatory obstacles. Nathan Schneider looks at how one state is pushing back.

[Read more](#)

Where candidates stand on Medicare and health reform *CBS Moneywatch*

A critical part of your retirement planning is to make sure you have sufficient medical insurance. Your options will be significantly influenced by our political leaders' positions on how the government should pay for Medicare and health care for retirees over the next few years and decades. In that spirit, let's examine the positions taken by the leading 2016 presidential candidates on these topics, to help you decide how to vote in the upcoming primaries and the presidential election next fall.

[Read more](#)

created by **Flash**issue
→ [Try it free](#)

Mailing address: Washington Community Action Network, 1806 E Yesler Way,
Seattle, WA, 98122, United States