

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON

WHEREAS, the health care crisis today is even more acute;

WHEREAS, our current health care delivery services are not oriented to preventive care and positive health promotion;

WHEREAS, persons without insurance are often at greater risk because they have not had preventive medical attention, such as pre-natal care, immunizations, initial diagnosis of progressive conditions;

WHEREAS, our society needs to prepare to provide services for the current number and predicted increase of persons with Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome;

WHEREAS, the escalating insurance costs are becoming prohibitive for large families, single-income families, unemployed persons and the elderly, and more people are experiencing the loss their insurance policies;

WHEREAS, health care services are unevenly distributed with inadequate care in poverty areas and in rural areas and health care facilities are literally disappearing from many communities;

WHEREAS, emergency hospitalization, major surgery or long term chronic or terminal illness costs are eradicating family financial resources;

WHEREAS, the general health of infants and children in this country is rapidly declining and epidemic outbreaks of preventable contagious diseases such as measles are again being seen in this country because poor children are not being immunized;

WHEREAS, people are increasingly voicing their discontent and frustration with the inefficient, costly and non-responsive current health care system;

WHEREAS, there are 43 million people with disabilities in the United States for whom obtaining insurance is either impossible or a difficulty due to what are termed "pre-existing conditions," which means often medical care or medicines are not made available to help control the situation, and does not improve upon the difficulties being experienced;

WHEREAS, many disabled persons cannot get health care because despite federal regulations, the buildings themselves are not yet accessible, nor are there interpreters for the deaf, or tactile signs to assist the blind;

WHEREAS, the cost of improved and much needed equipment used by disabled persons is often no longer being covered by insurance; and

WHEREAS, a universal access health care program would provide the fairest distribution of health care costs, promote improved health for the remainder of the population of our nation, generate important administrative savings and provide a stable base for fair reimbursement to health providers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ declares that an equitable, accessible system of universal health care in the United States is consistent with the moral and justice imperatives of the Christian Gospel.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod

calls upon instrumentalities, conferences and congregations of the United Church of Christ to:

- 1) initiate, with all deliberate speed, educational programs to increase awareness among United Church of Christ members and United Church of Christ health care providers concerning:
  - a) the Biblical and theological foundations of the moral and justice imperatives of the Gospel as they relate to health care issues; and
  - b) the many dimensions of the crisis in health care in the United States.
- 2) design and implement a process for the effective mobilization of United Church of Christ constituencies for proactive health care legislative activity and public policy advocacy.
- 3) encourage individual involvement in health care advocacy organizations engaged in efforts consistent with the principles and goals of this Proposed Pronouncement and prior General Synod action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod calls upon all constituent bodies and individual members of the United Church of Christ to become knowledgeable about the need for, and to actively work for, the establishment of a universal health care system in the United States that:

- 1) provides universal health care access to all persons in the United States equally, without discrimination;
- 2) provides a comprehensive array of services and benefits (Op. cit. 18) available to all who need them, including but not limited to health maintenance, preventative, diagnostic, therapeutic, and rehabilitative services, and chronic, long term home and hospice care for all illness and conditions and pre-conditions;
- 3) provides reasonable established standards of cost containment that address, among other things, the issues of reduction in administrative costs: regional planning and guidelines for efficient delivery of comprehensive health care services and the elimination of unnecessary and inappropriate capital expenditures and treatments; establishment of cost control standards and fees and parameters for malpractice litigation; and effective preventative education, programs and public policies;
- 4) provides an equitable and efficient system of health care delivery that is responsive to, and easily understood by the consumer;
- 5) provides an efficient, equitable system of health care financing drawn from the broadest possible resource base designed to ensure that persons with little or no income are neither excluded from nor restricted in accessibility to quality health care services, home and hospice care benefits; and
- 6) provides for educational support and encouragement of professional and para-professional health care workers to provide high quality health, home and hospice service.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 11. PROPOSAL FOR ACTION "TOWARD AN ACCESSIBLE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM"

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Mr. Blume moved the adoption of the Proposal for Action "Toward an Accessible Universal Health Care." The Rev. Susan King (HI) stated that last evening the General Synod voted a priority for universal health care and urged support of this proposal.

91-GS-70 VOTED: The Eighteenth General Synod adopts the Proposal for Action "Toward an Accessible Universal Health Care System."

### PROPOSAL FOR ACTION TOWARD AN ACCESSIBLE UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

#### SUMMARY

The proposal for action outlines ways in which all parts of the United Church of Christ may engage in Biblical and Theological reflection, education, strategy development, constituency mobilization, and public policy advocacy in support of equitable and accessible universal health care in the United States. It identifies the means by which this proposal will be implemented and funded.

#### BACKGROUND STATEMENT

The proposal for action is based upon the Pronouncement entitled "Toward an Accessible Universal Health Care System." The Pronouncement declares the Christian conviction that an equitable, accessible system of universal health care in the United States is consistent with the moral and justice imperatives of the Christians Gospel. It further calls upon all constituent bodies and individual members of the United Church of Christ to become knowledgeable about the need for, and to actively work for, the establishment of a universal health care system in the United States. This proposal for action sets forth program directions, mechanisms for implementation, and funding.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

The Eighteenth General Synod assigns the responsibility for coordination of this proposal for action to the UCC Health and Welfare Coordinating Council.

The programmatic development and implementation of the proposal for action is assigned jointly to the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and the Office for Church In Society, which shall convene a Universal Health Care Task Force to include representatives of other UCC instrumentalities and bodies, such as the Commission for Racial Justice, the Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, and the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries. The Task Force shall develop strategies from the directional statements and goals of the Pronouncement.

#### DIRECTIONAL STATEMENT AND GOALS

WHEREAS, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ has adopted the Pronouncement "Toward an Accessible Universal Health Care System;"

WHEREAS, this Pronouncement raises important issues to be addressed by the United Church of Christ;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls upon:

1. The UCC Health and Welfare Coordinating Council to:

coordinate strategies and programmatic initiatives for the full implementation of the Pronouncement "Toward an Accessible Universal Health Care System."

2. Members and congregations of the United Church of Christ to:

- a. engage in Biblical study and theological reflection regarding the moral and justice imperatives of the Christian Gospel as they related to the human need for health care;
- b. provide opportunities for youth and adults to engage in study regarding the many dimensions of the health care crises in the United States and the ways they, and their communities, are directly affected by the crisis;
- c. establish congregational health care task forces to identify the health care issues of greatest concern in the communities in which they are located;
- d. engage the congregation in dialogue regarding possible solutions, and
- e. communicate such concerns and ideas directly to the UCC Health and Welfare Coordinating Council;

3. Associations of the United Church of Christ to:

identify and become actively involved in local coalitions working for the establishment of an equitable, accessible universal health care system in the United States;

4. Conferences of the United Church of Christ to:

- a. facilitate the work of congregational health care task forces by identifying resources and providing opportunities for study and dialogue regarding effects of the health care crisis upon specific populations (e.g., the elderly, the urban poor, rural communities, infants and children);
- b. draw upon the resources of recognized UCC Health Care institutions within their boundaries to augment the congregational education process;
- c. identify and become actively involved in regional or state coalitions working for the establishment of an equitable, accessible universal health care system in the United States;

5. Instrumentalities of the United Church of Christ, specifically:

United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, to provide program staff assistance to the Health and Welfare Coordinating Council for implementation and oversight; as well as, to initiate and develop strategies and programmatic resources for denomination-wide usage.

Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society, to develop and provide to the congregational health care task forces resources regarding health care concerns of women and children;

Pension Boards, to develop and provide to the congregational health care task forces pertinent financial analysis of the current crisis in health care costs;

Commission for Racial Justice, to gather and distribute information to the congregational health care task forces on the effects of the health care crisis within racial and ethnic communities;

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Office for Church in Society, to develop regional and national strategies for public policy advocacy in support of universal health care legislation; provide ongoing legislative analysis regarding health care issues;

Office of Communication, to develop an effective media campaign on health care;

Office of Church Life and Leadership, to develop and provide to UCC pastors health care resources for pastoral care and counseling, and for worship and liturgical resources;

United Church Board for World Ministries, to conduct an analytic survey of health care systems in industrialized nations and distribute the results to the congregational health care task forces.

### 6. Agencies of the United Church of Christ

Council for Health and Human Services Ministries

- a. to encourage agency members to cooperate with the conferences to resource the congregational health care task forces;
- b. to identify, assess and provide to the Health and Welfare Coordinating Council various models for fee standardization, cost containment, and quality service provision relevant to the creation of an equitable, accessible universal health care system.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 12. RESOLUTION "ESTABLISHMENT OF A FEDERALLY FUNDED NATIONAL LONG TERM CARE PROGRAM"

Mr. Blume continued with the report of the committee and moved the adoption of the Resolution "Establishment of a Federally Funded National Long Term Care Program" found in Committee Reports, Part 4, page 17.

91-GS-71 VOTED: The Eighteenth General Synod adopts the Resolution "Establishment of a Federally Funded National Long Term Care Program."

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF A FEDERALLY FUNDED NATIONAL LONG TERM CARE PROGRAM

Endorsing the establishment of a federally funded national long term care program and committing the United Church of Christ to pursuing the enactment of such a program.

WHEREAS, one of every two persons over the age of 65 will be cared for in a long term care facility at some point, for some time, during his/her lifetime;

WHEREAS, thousands more persons will rely on long term care provided in the home by family care givers or paid home health agency staff;

WHEREAS, caring for family members often creates severe stress for care givers;

WHEREAS, demographic studies demonstrate that while our population ages, the demand and necessity for long term services will increase;

WHEREAS, by the year 2000, at least 8.9 million people of all ages will need long term care services;

WHEREAS, the Medicare program provides coverage to meet beneficiaries' acute care needs, but offers no coverage for long term care;

WHEREAS, the Medicaid program requires persons to possess limited assets or liquidate them before long term care coverage is provided;

WHEREAS, the private insurance industry has been unable to market consistently affordable individual long term care policies at reasonable premium prices; and

WHEREAS, payment for long term care is usually derived from the patient's assets or those of his/her family, creating severe financial hardships.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod endorses the establishment of a federal long term care program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Eighteenth General Synod asks that a federal long term care program should provide coverage of facility, home, and community-based care to all Americans regardless of age or infirmity, and that the program should be financed as broadly as possible.

Subject to the availability of funds.

### 13. PROPOSED PRONOUNCEMENT AND PROPOSAL FOR ACTION "IN DEFENSE OF HUMAN LIFE"

Ms. White moved the adoption of the Proposed Pronouncement "In Defense of Human Life" and shared that the committee recommended its defeat.

It was recommended by Shepherd of the Hills, United Church of Christ, Bechtelsville, PA, with the concurrence of Trinity United Church of Christ, Mt. Reading, PA; Blackstone Federated Church, Blackstone, MA; Christ Little Tulpehocken United Church of Christ, Bernville, PA; First Congregational Church United Church of Christ, Millers Falls, MA; St. Peter's United Church of Christ of Hilltown, Hilltown, PA; and St. Paul's United Church of Christ, Stowe, PA. to the Eighteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ meeting in Norfolk, Virginia June 27 - July 2, 1991.

Ms. White yielded to the Rev. Jeff Barton, UCC Ministers of Higher Education, who urged rejection of the proposal. Mr. Barton reminded the delegates that General Synod for 20 years has responded to the issue of freedom of choice. Mr. Barton commended a published compilation of statements and resolutions representing 20 years of debate, prayer and faithful learning from General Synods 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16 and 17 have all called us to carefully confirm responsibility and freedom of choice. It is Mr. Barton's opinion the proposed pronouncement does not further this discussion or lead us toward a new thing and he urged the delegates vote to reject the proposed pronouncement.

The Rev. John Brown (PSE) spoke in support of proposed pronouncement because all human life is precious.