



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Let's Talk about "The Heart in Health Care Reform"

"The Heart in Health Care Reform" is a post-reform project to help congregations and communities of faith move beyond cable news caricatures of health care reform to intentional reflection and conversation about reform based on the faith-inspired values that give meaning to the lives we share together.

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Resources to be used with this Discussion Guide

Study Guide: “Seeking Justice in Health Care: A Guide for Advocates in Faith Communities” – a 76-page resource that considers U.S. health care and health care reform through the lens of faith values

(May be downloaded from <http://www.faithfulreform.org>.)

Booklet: “A Moral Vision for Our Health Care Future” – a 16-page booklet that measures health care reform through “A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care”

(May be downloaded from <http://www.faithfulreform.org>.)

PowerPoint: “The Heart in Health Care Reform” – a PowerPoint presentation that measures health care reform through “A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care”

(May be downloaded from <http://www.faithfulreform.org>.)

Fact Sheets: A Daily Dose of Truth – a series of reflections to help concerned citizens understand the truth behind the media sound-bites and viral emails that are intended to undermine support for health care reform

(May be downloaded from <http://www.faithfulreform.org>.)

Selected one-page Fact Sheets – specific information relevant for members of your community of faith

(Available through your own faith community, health care justice groups, and Faithful Reform in Health Care)

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Proceeds from the sale of this publication will support the efforts of the Faithful Reform in Health Care coalition and the further development of resources for those working for health care justice within their communities of faith.

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Introduction

As noted in “Seeking Justice in Health Care: A Guide for Advocates in Faith Communities,” people of faith will have very important roles to play as we work toward building a system of health care that works well for all of us. Specifically, as we raise “A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care” we are called to educate, advocate, dialogue, and offer hope about our health care future.

Communities of faith are called to these roles for several reasons:

- Through their social principles and/or resolutions, most faith communities support a system of quality and affordable health care that includes all of us.
- We reflect a broad cross-section of the American public, representing the full racial/ethnic, socio-economic, geographic, and political diversity of our country.
- Faith leaders are often among those called upon to help resolve conflict, to facilitate civil discourse, and to build bridges in the midst of community discord.
- We gather in our various communities of faith because of common shared beliefs grounded in the teachings of our sacred texts. In all faith traditions, these teachings call followers to contribute to the common good and show special concern for those who are most vulnerable.
- In the midst of our diversity, we can reflect upon and engage in dialogue about health care reform through the lens of our faith values. By doing so, we can make an important and *positive* contribution to our national discourse about the shape of our health care future.
- Grounded in our values, we can help move this difficult debate from what is politically prudent or economically feasible to dialogue which embraces compassion and justice and the moral imperative of health care for all.

“The Heart in Health Care Reform” is a post-reform project to help congregations and communities of faith move beyond cable news interpretations of health care reform to intentional reflection and conversation based on the faith-inspired values that give meaning to the lives we share together.



A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care

We, as people of faith, envision a society where each person is afforded health, wholeness, and human dignity.

That vision embraces a health care system that is: inclusive, accessible, affordable and accountable.

► Vision: Inclusive

Health care is a shared responsibility that is grounded in our common humanity.

In the bonds of our human family, we are created to be **equal**. We are guided by a divine will to treat each person with **dignity** and to live together as an **inclusive community**. Affirming our commitment to the common good, we acknowledge our enduring responsibility to **care for one another**. As we recognize that society is whole only when we care for the most vulnerable among us, we are led to discern the human right to health care and wholeness. Therefore, we are called to act with **compassion** by sharing our **abundant** health care resources with everyone.

► Vision: Affordable

Health care must contribute to the common good by being affordable for individuals, families and society as a whole.

We believe that in the **sacred act of creation** we are endowed with the **talents, wisdom** and **abundant resources** necessary to meet the needs of one another, including the health care needs of all. Therefore, in our calling to be **faithful stewards**, we understand our responsibility to use our health care resources **effectively**, to administer them **efficiently**, and to distribute them with **equity**.

► Vision: Accessible

All persons should have access to health services that provide necessary care and contribute to wellness.

We believe **humanity is sacred** and that all persons should benefit from those actions which contribute to our **health and wholeness**. Therefore, we are called to act with **justice** and **love**, to ensure that all of us have access to the health care we need in order to live out the **fullness of our potential** both as individuals and as contributing members of our society. We must work together to identify and overcome all barriers to and disparities in such care.

► Vision: Accountable

Our health care system must be accountable, offering a quality, equitable and sustainable means of keeping us healthy as individuals and as a community.

We believe that as **spiritual and sacred vessels**, we are responsible for the **care of our bodies** to the best of our ability and for the **care of one another** regardless of individual circumstances. Therefore, individuals, families, governments, businesses, and the faith community are called to work in **partnership** for a system that ensures fully-informed, timely, quality and safe care that treats **body, mind and spirit**.

“A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care” was developed by the members of the Faithful Reform in Health Care coalition, an interfaith coalition of faith communities and individuals working for compassionate, comprehensive and sustainable health care reform in the United States.

Dialogue

The dichotomy of *liberal Democrats* versus *conservative Republicans* traditionally characterizes our political process. Even though everyone can agree that *health care is a people issue not a partisan issue*, this dichotomy is an ever-present force that continues to impact our discourse about health care reform. And, even though good people with good hearts and moral grounding sit on both sides of the aisle in Congress and in our state houses, the potential for reform has remained elusive until now. As we look toward the implementation and improvement of the health reform law passed in 2010, it is clear that building a system that works well for all of us will happen only when we can see the value in one another's perspectives and approach the issue with a willingness to reach consensus for the greater good.

The faith community has the potential for producing the voices needed for such collaboration. The debate surrounding health care reform must move beyond what is politically prudent or economically feasible to dialogue which embraces compassion and justice and the moral imperative of health care for all. Voices of faith are uniquely positioned to initiate such dialogue and to encourage conversation that transcends ideological difference and political partisanship. Guidance for such dialogue is offered here.

Description of dialogue

IN DIALOGUE . . .

We pay attention to the wisdom of the group.

We listen for new thinking and ideas that help us address complex and challenging issues.

A conversation is a dialogue when people in a group agree to:

- Listen deeply to one another, giving full attention to each other, looking for common ground.
- Respect the ideas and viewpoints of each person, trusting that others have part of the answer.
- Give voice to their own ideas and thinking.

In dialogue, each person also monitors her/his participation, taking responsibility for getting her/his ideas out there, while making sure that others in the group have both the clock time and a respectful environment in which to share their ideas. In dialogue, we see changes in thinking and often see new ideas emerge.

Dialogue is usually in danger when people defend their point of view, assume there is one right answer, criticize others' thinking, ask questions that are really opinions or judgments, and look only for conclusions that agree with their thinking.

[Quoted with permission from Our Health Care Future.]

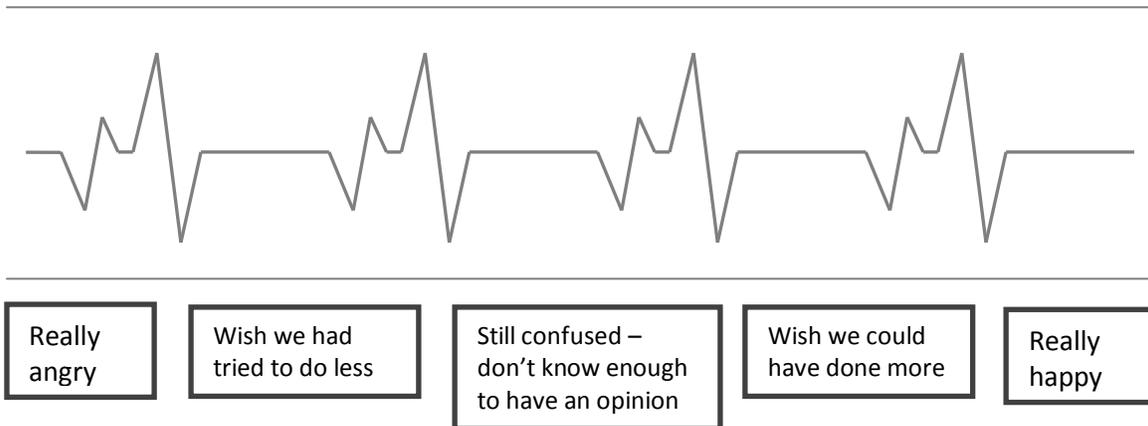
Guide for a 2-hour session

Note: If at all possible, try to make arrangements for a 2-hour session – or at least two one-hour sessions. Experience has shown that everyone wants to talk about the issue of health care reform. To allow time to present content and allow for conversation, a minimum of two hours will be needed.

Before the session:

- Gather your supplies and print materials.
- Invite people to sign-up in advance so you can prepare adequately for the numbers of participants.
- Make arrangements for an LCD projector and laptop computer to show the PowerPoint.
- Print: “A Faith-Inspired Vision of Health Care” from the front of this packet (pg 3) and the Evaluation Form (pg 11).
- Print on a poster/chalk board, or print to distribute the “Description of Dialogue” (pg 5).
- Find statements from your community of faith about health care and health care reform; make copies for the group, or write excerpts on a chalk board, flip chart, etc. for participants to see.
- Identify a particular health care reform legislative issue around which the group could engage in advocacy as a follow-up to the presentation.
- On a piece of rolled paper, or on a chalk/white board, draw a 6-9 foot diagram of a heart beat.
- Prepare sheets of paper or sticky-notes (approx size: letter-size sheet cut into 4 pieces) for participants to write their “pulse” of health care reform.

The Pulse of Health Care Reform



As participants arrive:

- **Give** each participant: name tag (if needed), 6-page leaflet, “pulse sheet.”
- **Ask** participants to think about how they are feeling about health care reform; then write why they are feeling that way and place their statements in the appropriate place on the “pulse” chart.

The session:

1. **Share an opening reflection** based on your faith community's social principles and/or policy statements related to health care and health care reform.
2. **Share with the group the purpose of this session:** To engage in reflection and conversation about health care reform through the lens of faith values, ie to put aside our political and economic views on the subject in order to consider this issue in a moral frame.
3. **Invite** participants to read the "Description of Dialogue" – either printed from this packet, or printed on a chalk/white board or wall poster.
4. **Acknowledge** that participants came to this session with a wide variety of perspectives. Invite participants to very briefly share in ONE sentence what they put on the "pulse" chart.
(Keep pushing to make this section as brief as possible. You want to acknowledge their feelings, but quickly move on.)
5. **Show** the PowerPoint presentation "The Heart in Health Care Reform," using the script provided in the PowerPoint notes.
(Tell the group there will be times for questions and comments at various times within the PowerPoint and ask them to save their comments for those times.)
6. **Divide** the group into smaller groups to discuss the following:
 - What new insights did you gain from the PowerPoint?
 - How do you think differently about health care reform after seeing the PowerPoint presentation?
 - What questions remain?
 - What can we as individuals and as communities of faith do to change the conversation about health care reform – to communicate that the starting point for our health care future needs to be grounded in values that contribute to the common good?
7. **Re-convene** in the large group and ask participants to share common insights from their small group.
8. **Invite** participants to "shout-out" what faith values jump out as most important to them as we continue moving into our health care future.
(You may wish to have someone write these values on a flip chart or board to reinforce visually what people are saying.)
9. **Share** information about a current health care legislative issue around which your state or federal policy-makers need to hear perspectives from people of faith. Decide as a group, if possible, what individual or collective actions you want to take.
10. **Evaluate** the session using the Evaluation Form on pg. 11.
11. **Conclude** with a prayer circle, inviting each person who is willing to share a prayer for our health care future.

Guide for 2 one-hour sessions

Session 1

Before the session:

- **Prepare** for the two sessions following all of the suggestions listed in the preparation section of the two-hour session.

As participants arrive:

- **Give** each participant: name tag (if needed), 6-page leaflet, “pulse sheet.”
- **Ask** participants to think about how they are feeling about health care reform; then write why they are feeling that way and place their statements in the appropriate place on the “pulse” chart.

The session:

- **Follow** steps 1 – 5 in the 2-hour session outline.
(When showing the PowerPoint, you will need to acknowledge that the time for discussing it will be in Session 2, not in the context of the initial viewing.)
- **Ask** all participants to READ the 6-pg leaflet prior to the next session.
- **Conclude** with a prayer circle, inviting each person who is willing to share a prayer for our health care future.

Session 2

Before the session:

- **Prepare** for the two sessions following all of the suggestions listed in the preparation section of the two-hour session.
- **Re-post** the “pulse” chart.
- **Post** another chart that has listed on it 6 or 8 values that connect your faith tradition to health care and health care reform. (Provide 3 dots or mini-post-it notes per participant for their use.)

As participants arrive:

- **Ask** participants to reflect upon the faith values that have been discussed in relation to health care reform. Ask them to put dots/sticky notes on the chart next to the 3 values that are most important to them.

The session:

- Follow steps 6 – 11 in the 2-hour session outline.

Template for the “Check Your Pulse” activity

Check your pulse on health care reform

Think about how you are feeling about health care reform at this moment.

Then... on the sheet below write **WHY** you think you are feeling that way and post your response on the “pulse” chart on the wall.

Values Chart

(for Session 2 of 2 sessions, or an additional activity for 1 session)

Post a chart that has listed on it 6 or 8 values that connect your faith tradition to health care and health care reform.

Provide 3 dots or mini-post-it notes per participant for their use.)

What values do you think are most important for our health care system?

Includes everyone

Affordable

Accessible

Accountable

Compassionate

High quality

Good stewardship

Other?

Opening / Closing Prayers

O Spirit of God, you breathe over the chaos of our time and bring forth creation.
 O Spirit of God, you lead us as a pillar of cloud some days in obscurity, ambiguity, insecurity and doubt.
 O Spirit of God, you have led us in these days as a pillar of fire in our night that led to a vote and a glimpse of the reign of God where the common good is real and at the heart of federal policy.

O Spirit of God, be with us in these days ahead as we strive to finish the work that we have begun.
 O Spirit of God, be with us, heal our hearts of any woundedness and ill feeling.
 O Spirit of God, etch in our hearts the words of President Abraham Lincoln in his Second Inaugural address:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for (those) who shall have borne the battle and for (the) widow and (the) orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

O Spirit of God, be with us always. For this we pray. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer offered by Sister Simone Campbell
 Executive Director, NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
 on a conference call in the days following the passage of health care reform

Reflection on Jewish Perspectives on Health Care

Teachings from Jewish scripture – Leviticus 19: "Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor." Judaism advances two core values underlying an abiding commitment to provide health care to all of God's children. The first is that an individual human life is of infinite value; the second is that we are endowed with wisdom and strength to be God's partners in repairing the world. Just as the Talmud teaches that a physician is obligated to heal and that a patient is obligated to obtain health care, so too are we taught that the whole of society is responsible for ensuring that every individual has access to health care.

Reflection on Christian Perspectives on Health Care

Teachings from Christian Scripture – Mark 2:3: “Then some people came, bringing to [Jesus] a paralytic, carried by four of them... He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.’” Christian scripture is filled with Jesus’ acts of healing, but this particular scripture also lifts up our responsibility in helping others access the care they need. We are reminded that all of the stories about Jesus’ healing ministry were found in larger narratives about our common humanity, compassion, human dignity, shared responsibility, and God’s intention for our health and wholeness.

Reflection on Islamic Perspectives on Health Care

Ayahs from the Holy Qur’an. “A person whose passions respond only to his or her personal needs, and who is only concerned with his or her own personal and familial life, has long abandoned the true purpose of life...” (15:3). True Muslims are compassionate human beings, whose passions are aligned with a divine purpose of life. It is a pleasure for Muslims to help address health care needs, for piety is achieved in giving what you love most to those who need you.

“The Heart in Health Care Reform” Presentation Evaluation

Thank you for attending this presentation.

Presentations such as these are happening all over the country to help people of faith better understand how health care reform helps move us to a vision of a more compassionate health care future.

Please share your feedback to help members of the Faithful Reform in Health Care coalition improve future presentations.

Please circle your response to the following questions.

This presentation helped me better understand:

What is in the new health reform law	Yes	Somewhat	No
How the new law will impact our health care system	Yes	Somewhat	No
How the new law will impact me	Yes	Somewhat	No

Today’s presentation was:

Interesting	Yes	Somewhat	No
Informative	Yes	Somewhat	No
Easy to understand	Yes	Somewhat	No

How would you describe your feelings toward health reform before today’s presentation?

- Really angry
- Wish we had tried to do less
- Still confused
- Wish we could have done more
- Really happy

How would you describe your feelings toward health reform after today’s presentation?

- Really angry
- Wish we had tried to do less
- Still confused
- Wish we could have done more
- Really happy

Other comments on the presentation:

[Adapted with permission from an evaluation form prepared by Missouri Health Care for All.]

Additional resources for reflection and dialogue

- Visit the website or contact the social justice office of your own community of faith.
- Faithful Reform in Health Care <<http://www.faithfulreform.org>>
- Our Healthcare Future <<http://www.OurHealthcareFuture.org>>
- Vision and Voice: Faithful Citizens and Health Care <http://www.visionandvoice.org>

Additional information about health care reform

Center for Medicare Advocacy: <http://www.medicareadvocacy.org>

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: <http://www.cbpp.org>

Community Catalyst: <http://www.communitycatalyst.org>

Congressional Budget Office: <http://www.cbo.gov>

Faithful Reform in Health Care: <http://www.faithfulreform.org>

Families USA: <http://www.familiesusa.org>

Herndon Alliance: <http://www.herndonalliance.org>

Kaiser Family Foundation: <http://www.kff.org> (See the video “Health Reform Hits Main Street”)

Library of Congress: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

Medicare Rights Center: <http://www.medicarerights.org>

National Immigration Law Center: <http://www.nilc.org>

National Women’s Law Center: <http://www.nwlc.org>

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation: <http://www.rwjf.org>

Small Business Majority: <http://www.smallbusinessmajority.org>

The Commonwealth Fund: <http://www.commonwealthfund.org>

United States Department of Health and Human Services: <http://www.hhs.gov>;

<http://www.healthcare.gov>; <http://www.cuidadodesalud.gov/enes/>

United States House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov>; <http://www.speaker.gov>

United States Senate: <http://www.senate.gov>

White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov>

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in collaboration with coalition members whose thoughtful reflections have contributed to the growing commitment to health care justice in the United States.

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