

LET OUR LIGHT SHINE!



Health Care for All

Tool Kit of Interfaith Resources for:
Candlelight Vigils... Prayer Breakfasts
Prayer Services... and more!

Faithful Reform in Health Care
www.faithfulreform.org | contact@faithfulreform.org

2009

This Tool Kit was produced by Faithful Reform in Health Care, an interfaith coalition of national, state, and local groups and individuals who understand the faith community's important role in working for a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us.

People of faith are encouraged to use the resources as part of an effort to raise the visibility and voices of people of faith who care about health care reform in the United States.

All resources may be used and/or reprinted with citation given to Faithful Reform in Health Care or the appropriate citations as noted on specific pages.

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



Let Our Light Shine for Health Care

INVITATION

NOW is the time to act! The largest faith-inspired mobilization EVER for health care reform continues – from events in early Spring 2009, in the nationwide events surrounding June’s Interfaith Week of Prayer for Health Care, in the Services of Remembrance and Hope, and now through the continuing **Let Our Light Shine for Health Care** effort. Planned to coincide with strategic legislative moments, events all across the country will elevate the moral imperative for compassionate and comprehensive reform. In small and large congregations, hospital chapels, college campuses, and public squares, people of faith are called to pray for those who are left out of our health care system – and for those with the power to enact change. Further, we are urged to show our support for reform by reaching out to our Members of Congress with as many voices as possible – and as often as possible – urging them to transcend partisan politics and engage in dialogue that makes change happen.

Why Host an Event? Hosting prayer events around the country will give people of faith an opportunity to reflect on the deep scriptural, spiritual roots of our work to support health care reform, highlighting the moral aspects of the issue and remembering the real-life consequences of our broken health care system. It will show our Senators and Representatives that we seek health care reform which is grounded in the sacred bonds of our common humanity and reflects faithful stewardship of our abundant health care resources. It will demonstrate the depth and breadth of public support for a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us.

EVERYONE can be a part of this nation-wide effort—from the smallest community of faith to large suburban congregations or city-wide coalitions! This tool kit is provided by the Faithful Reform in Health Care coalition to help connect your efforts to others all over the country – and to make planning easy!

Thank you for your commitment to this work! We’re excited to know all of our voices will be raised up during the coming weeks in a vibrant call for comprehensive, compassionate and sustainable health care reform in the United States.

Tool Kit Contents

- ◆ Suggestions for Events
- ◆ Getting Organized: A quick how-to on planning your prayer event
- ◆ Event Planning Checklist
- ◆ Sample outlines for events
- ◆ Interfaith Reflections for a Prayer Vigil or Prayer Breakfast
- ◆ Prayer Litany for the Uninsured and Under-insured
- ◆ Sample media advisory, Op-Ed, Letter to the Editor
- ◆ List of additional resources
- ◆ New song: “Let Our Light Shine”

Many thanks to the Interfaith Immigration Coalition for their inspiration and guidelines upon which many of the planning resources in this Tool Kit were based.



Getting Started: Selecting your event

EVENT SUGGESTIONS

1. **Plan a PUBLIC prayer vigil or prayer breakfast** coordinated with multiple communities of faith. Set a goal for attendance that would attract your local media, and even your member of Congress. Invite members of other organizations working on health care reform. Publicize the event through the bulletins, newsletters, or websites of the participating congregations.
2. **Plan a prayer vigil, prayer service, or Health Care Sabbath for your own local community of faith or congregation.** If your congregation is already engaged in direct health care services, consider inviting someone to share his or her story as part of the event. Even these single-congregation events can be a great opportunity to engage your local media.

If you have a member of Congress in your congregation, invite that person to participate in a time of prayer and candlelighting during one of your services of worship.

3. **Add a focus on health care reform** to an existing/on-going community event or activity, such as a voter registration drive, community gatherings, health center activities, and/or discussion for your worshipping community. Contact local media to let them know you're doing it!
4. **Encourage your clergy** or lay leaders to offer a sermon, include a prayer litany and candlelighting, or other major focus on health care during one of your regular services of worship. Contact local media to let them know you're doing it!
5. **Hold an event** at a health care facility connected to your community of faith – a hospital, extended care facility, community clinic, etc. Contact local media to let them know you're doing it!

Register Your Event Now

PLEASE **register your event with the coordinating organization.** You can also use the calendar to find out who else is planning events in your area. Registering your event is **IMPORTANT**—it helps us track and connect people to you and provides information so that other advocates in your town know how to get involved.

Please report EVERY activity, small or large, to add your voice to the many voices of faith that will be raised in the coming weeks! Even a small event, multiplied around the country, will send a powerful message to our representatives in Congress that health care reform is a moral issue that is important to people of faith and conscience.



Getting Organized: A quick how-to on planning your event

Define your goals:

- ◆ **Purpose:** What is the purpose of this event? How does this particular event move you towards your larger community, grassroots, or legislative goals for health care for all?
- ◆ **Audience:** Who do you want to participate? Your community? Your local, state, or federal officials? What age group? What demographic?
- ◆ **Desired Outcome:** What do you want to happen because of this event? BE SPECIFIC. While an event may fall into a larger goal of passing comprehensive health care reform, being specific will help you focus your planning. The more specific you can be, the more effective you can be in your organizing.
For example: “We want the town mayor to issue a positive statement on health care reform” or “We want 30 people to sign a postcard to their Congressperson.”

Keeping in mind these three goals, consider the elements below when planning your event.

Plan your event!

1. Type of event, length and location

- a. Keep both the length of the vigil and the expected attendance realistic, an hour can be a large time commitment for people especially members of Congress. Know your audience, and plan accordingly. Short – but meaningful – is OK!
- b. Consider what time of day will best serve your purpose.
- c. Location
 - Does it fit the tone and purpose of your event?
 - Is it realistic for your expected attendance? (You don’t want to be in a location for 80 if your attendance is 1!
 - Is it easily accessible?
 - What permits are needed for public sites?
 - Is there sufficient parking?
 - Are there any traffic considerations?
- d. Is sound equipment needed? If so, is there electrical outlet access?
- e. If you have equipment like microphones, is there access to electrical outlets? Is there an echo?

>>>>

2. Leadership / Speakers

- a. Are there prominent faith leaders in your community who could attend and offer comments, reflections, or a prayer?
- b. Which leaders best represent the faith communities you are aiming to engage?
- c. Will there be a leader/emcee to get the vigil/event started? Who?

3. Materials/equipment

- a. What type of equipment do you need? Cameras, banners, candles, microphone, projectors?
- b. Will you be outside long enough that people might need water?
- c. Do you need chairs for speakers, musicians, persons with special needs, etc?
- d. Depending on the size crowd you expect, do you need a megaphone? Microphone?
- e. Will you have a sign-in or an information booth? Who will work it?

4. Recruitment—a successful event needs people!

- a. Who do you want to attend this event and how can you make sure they do?
 1. What could prevent them from coming (think weather, time of day etc.) and can any of those obstacles be avoided?
 2. What natural networks in your community or place of worship can you tap into? Who leads those networks? Invite them join you in planning your event to more easily recruit members of their networks to your event.
- b. Do you want people in policy-making positions to come?
 1. **To invite your member of Congress to attend the prayer vigil, contact the scheduler immediately to determine their process for honoring speaking requests.**
 2. If your member of Congress cannot, ask if a spokesperson from the office can participate and make a statement on behalf of the Senator or Representative, or at the very least provide a written statement that can be read.
 3. Make sure the Congressional office receives any publicity, press releases and/or press coverage from the event as a follow-up.

5. Publicity

- a. Distribute event information to other organizations and have their leaders contact their members
- b. Fliers/Newspapers/Radio announcements—What best reaches your audience? Consider placing an op-ed or writing a letter to the editor of your local paper to promote your vigil.
- c. Send a Media Advisory to the local media at least a week and the day before the event. Follow up with personal phone calls.
- d. Send a press release after the event with quotes, numbers in attendance, etc.

6. Follow-up

- a. Send pictures/video/audio recordings of your event to local/national offices of your members of Congress.
- b. Get blog posts, pictures, articles about the event everywhere you can.
- c. Send pictures/video/audio recordings – or links to these things – of your event to Faithful Reform in Health Care so that your event can be included in the growing list of faith activities that support health care reform.



Candlelight Vigil / Prayer Breakfast: Planning Check List

Taking the first steps:

- Assemble a core planning team—invite leaders of other groups whose members share your concerns.
- If you plan to invite your member(s) of Congress, contact the local office ASAP to get instructions about extending an official invitation. Follow-up immediately.
- Select and invite speakers and those offering prayers. Generally, it's good to have just one or two speakers to lead, with a broad and representative cross section of faith leaders offering short prayers and reflections.
- Identify persons who are willing to share their stories about how our broken health system has impacted their lives. Select an appropriate location. If an outside event is planned, try to select a busy traffic area where participants can be easily seen but are safe in the gathering.
- Find out if you will need permissions to use your location and begin the process of applying for permits. When planning in a short time-frame, selecting the front lawn or parking lot of a place of worship will make it easier to secure a site quickly.
- Find a photographer if you want photos or video of your event.
- Begin adapting promotional or media materials for the event.
- Begin inviting people to your event through word of mouth, newsletters, bulletins, website, and/or listserv of your community of faith and any other group that is involved in planning your event.
- Register your event!

If you are serving food, make your initial meal arrangements. Make sure the food served provides healthy choices. In addition, if this is an interfaith event, work with your interfaith leadership to respect the dietary practices of those who will be in attendance!

One Week before your event

- Begin gathering all equipment you will need—sound equipment, extension cords, chairs, projectors, coffee dispensers, etc.
- Adapt media advisory and press release with quotes from speakers and send to your local media.
- Go over the program and confirm who will be praying and speaking.
- If food or refreshments are served, confirm expected attendance with food provider.

The day before your event

- Make sure you have all equipment ready for the next day, your speakers and the emcee for your event are prepared, and any other people who are staffing the event know their role (in charge of the sign-in table, taking pictures, handing out programs, welcoming press & handing out news release, etc.)
- Prepare a sign-in sheet for participants, so you can continue to communicate with them after the event is over.

The day of your event

- Arrive early to set up—give yourself and your team plenty of time to set-up sound equipment, tables, literature tables, etc.
- Greet participants, give them a copy of the event program and ask them to sign up on the sign-up sheet for future updates.
- Greet reporters, give them a copy of your press release, and ask them to sign in on a sheet of paper – ask for their name, media outlet, email address and phone number (you may need their contact information for the next event or to follow up).
- At the conclusion of the event, make sure to thank everyone for their attendance and let them know how to stay involved.

Follow-up

- Follow up to thank your speakers and those who attended your event.
- Send pictures/video/audio recordings of your event to Faithful Reform in Health Care at action@faithfulreform.org.



Candlelight Vigil / Prayer Breakfast Outline

Sample #1

(centered on stories representing the 5 people who die each hour for lack of health care)

“Let Our Light Shine for Health Care”

An Interfaith Candlelight Prayer Vigil for Health Care for All

Gathering Music

- 3 min **Welcome, opening statement, call to prayer**
- 2 min **Opening Prayer** *(all participants in unison): In the sacred bonds of our common humanity, we give thanks for the life that we share and for our calling to care for each other. We acknowledge that we have failed to care for every member of our human family, and have not ensured that all may receive the health care they need for the life that you intend. We pray for forgiveness for hearts that have been slow to feel another’s pain, for hands that have been still when caring touch was needed, and for voices that have remained silent while millions suffer for lack of health care. Amen.*
- 7 min **Tolling of a bell of remembrance** *(large handbell or soft gong)*
A story of remembrance *(personal story)*
Reflection and prayer *(faith leader)*
Song and candlelighting
Response of the people *(all participants in unison): We remember our brothers and sisters who suffer for lack of needed health care. May the valleys and the burdens of sickness and disease be conquered when we raise our voices of faith to the simple, moral, and merciful imperative of caring for one another.*
- 28 min ***(Repeat this section 4 more times for a total of 5 stories, etc.)***
- 10 min **Call to action** *(faith leader)*
- 1 min **Response of the people** *(in unison): In hope let us commit to changing our broken health care system; to challenge our elected leaders with the moral call for compassionate reform; to urge them to stand up with courage to fight the dangers of the status quo; to transcend the sins of greed and of profits earned at the cost of denying needed care; and to create a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us.*
- 3 min **Song:** “Let Our Light Shine” *(included in this Tool Kit)*
*Let our light shine, let our voices be heard, til justice flows down like a river,
Til all who are broken by sickness and pain, may come to the waters of healing.
(Repeat first two lines)
Let our light shine, let our voices be heard. (Repeat 2 more times)*
- 1 min **Closing response**
Let our light shine, let our voices be heard! (repeat 3 times – louder each time!)
-



Candlelight Vigil / Prayer Breakfast Outline

Sample #2 (with one primary speaker)

“Let Our Light Shine for Health Care”

An Interfaith Candlelight Prayer Vigil (or Prayer Breakfast) for Health Care for All

Gathering Music

5 min Welcome and Call to Prayer

Unison Prayer: In the sacred bonds of our common humanity, we give thanks for the life that we share and for our calling to care for each other. We acknowledge that we have failed to care for every member of our human family, and have not ensured that all may receive the health care they need for the life that you intend. We pray for forgiveness for hearts that have been slow to feel another’s pain, for hands that have been still when caring touch was needed, and for voices that have remained silent while millions suffer for lack of health care. Amen.

5 min Remarks and Introductions

5 min each Prayers/reflections from variety of faith communities

5 min Personal testimony about lack of health care

3 min Music, dance, etc.

2 min Introduction of Speaker

15 min Proclamation

5 min Music, dance, etc. (including the lighting of candles)

5 min Call to Action and Benediction

Departing Music

Nearly all faith traditions include teachings about the provision of health care. Simply select those most relevant to your local community. See the Interfaith Reflections in this Tool Kit as a guide for what you could develop in the absence of persons to represent the various faith perspectives. Don’t forget church musicians, Jewish cantors, etc. in your consideration of leadership!



Candlelight Vigil / Prayer Breakfast Outline

Sample #3 (with no primary speaker)

“Let Our Light Shine for Health Care”

An Interfaith Candlelight Prayer Vigil (or Prayer Breakfast) for Health Care for All

	Gathering Music	
5 min	Welcome and Call to Prayer	
	Unison Prayer: <i>In the sacred bonds of our common humanity, we give thanks for the life that we share and for our calling to care for each other. We acknowledge that we have failed to care for every member of our human family, and have not ensured that all may receive the health care they need for the life that you intend. We pray for forgiveness for hearts that have been slow to feel another’s pain, for hands that have been still when caring touch was needed, and for voices that have remained silent while millions suffer for lack of health care. Amen.</i>	
5 min	Remarks and Introductions	<p>Nearly all faith traditions include teachings about the provision of health care. Simply select those most relevant to your local community. See the Interfaith Reflections in this Tool Kit as a guide for what you could develop in the absence of persons to represent the various faith perspectives. Don’t forget church musicians, Jewish cantors, etc. in your consideration of leadership!</p>
5 min each	Reflections/prayers from variety of faith communities	
5 min	Personal testimony about lack of health care	
3 min	Music, dance, etc.	
10 min	Litany of Prayer for the Uninsured and Uninsured, including the lighting of candles (found in this Tool Kit)	
5 min	Music, dance, etc.	
5 min	Call to Action and Benediction	
	Departing Music	



Interfaith Reflections for a Prayer Service or Candlelight Vigil

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.

Prayer from the Jewish Tradition (to be offered by a Jewish participant or leader)

Unison Participant Response: Strengthen us to use our hearts, hands, and voices to raise our vision for a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us.

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.

Prayer from the Christian Tradition (to be offered by a Christian participant or leader)

Unison Participant Response: Strengthen us to use our hearts, hands, and voices to raise our vision for a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us.

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.

Prayer from the Islamic Tradition (to be offered by a Muslim participant or leader)

Unison Participant Response: Strengthen us to use our hearts, hands, and voices to raise our vision for a health care future that includes everyone and works well for all of us.



A Litany of Prayer and Candlelighting for the Uninsured and Underinsured

[This Litany of Prayer can be used as a focal point of prayer time in a service of worship, as the central prayer time for a short vigil, or as a part of a longer event. It has reportedly been used effectively in each of these kinds of settings.]

Reader #1: We are the millions of men and women in our national community who—for a variety of reasons: downsizing, outsourcing, restructuring—will wake up one day this year to learn that we no longer have a job. Added to the stress of finding a new job, we'll also have to figure out how to continue to provide health care for our families. If we are fortunate to have health insurance, we will be faced with paying more at a time when we are trying to make do with less.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

Reader #2: We are the 4 million people in our national community who will celebrate a 19th birthday this next year. As we blow out the candles on the cake, we may be marking the loss of our health insurance. Our society will ensure that if we call the fire department, someone will respond. It will not offer us the same guarantee for our health.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

Reader #3: We are the 5 million children in our national community whose lack of health insurance sets up a barrier to good health. We are children in a nation that works to make sure we each have a basic education. We are children in a nation which ignores that we need a similar guarantee for health care.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

Reader #4: We are the 30 million workers between the ages of 18 and 64 who earn less than \$9 an hour. Those of us who work full-time earn \$18,800 a year. Many of us are the store clerks, mechanics, dry cleaners, and restaurant workers you meet. Our nation relies on our work to keep American humming along. We typically have no health insurance. We make too much to get health care from public health programs. We often end up in emergency rooms for care because we have no other place to go.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

>>>>

Reader #5: We are the owners of small businesses, those businesses with less than 100 workers. We employ 38 million people in communities across the country. We support the local little league team and sponsor civic events. Because of the high cost, we often are unable to provide the protection of health insurance for our employees.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

Reader #6: We are the six of every 10 people in the United States who are lucky enough to have jobs that offer health insurance for our families. And yet, each year, we find that we are paying more. Deductibles and co-payments keep going up. More and more things are not covered by our insurance, which means we have to pay for them. As a result, many of us—people who own homes, who had full-time employment and insurance before getting ill—will declare bankruptcy because of our medical bills.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

Reader #7: We are the 20,000+ people who will die this year because we do not have the security of health care that comes with having insurance. Out of pride, out of shame, out of fear – or because we simply don't have the money to go to the doctor – we will ignore signs that our health may be in jeopardy. If we do get medical attention it will be too late.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

Reader #8: We are the uncounted millions for whom preventive health care and a healthy lifestyle are a struggle. We live in the inner city where fresh fruit and vegetables are not available in our markets. We live in rural communities with no doctors. The color of our skin or our gender disproportionately impacts the diagnosis and treatment of a medical condition.

Response: "You are or have been one of us. We know or have known others. We care for you and we pray for you, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters."

(Light a candle; moment of silence)

(Adapted from "Readings from the Uninsured" in "Vision and Voice: Faithful Citizens and Health Care.")

Let Our Light Shine

Inspired by the words of the prophet Amos:
"Let justice roll down like a river,
and righteousness like an everflowing stream."

Rev. Linda Hanna Walling

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The lyrics are: "Let our light shine let our voices be heard 'til just-ice rolls down like a riv-er 'til all who are brok-en by sick-ness and pain may come to the wat-ers of heal-ing. Let our light shine let our voices be heard Let our light shine let our voices be heard!". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamics. Chord symbols (C, Am, F, G7, Dm) are placed above the staff lines. Dynamics include *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*. A fermata is placed over the final note of the last staff.

Copyright © 2009 Faithful Reform In Health Care. www.faithfulreform.org. All Rights Reserved.
Permission is given for duplication of this music for use in activities that further the work of social justice,
provided that copyright attribution remains intact.



Additional Resources

Worship and prayer resources

- Faithful Reform in Health Care website: <http://www.faithfulreform.org>
- Be sure to check the national website of your own community of faith!

Advocacy resources: In addition to your own community of faith, numerous groups and coalitions will be launching advocacy opportunities in the days ahead. You are urged to include actions and next steps beyond your prayer and candle lighting witness – including phone calls, letters, postcards and visits to your members of Congress.

- Sign up for the health care or social justice email list in your community of faith to stay current with the action opportunities based on the legislative priorities of your own faith group.
- Sign up for the email list at Faithful Reform in Health Care to get timely information about legislative progress, timely actions, and faith-inspired messaging for health care for all. <http://www.faithfulreform.org>

Understanding the issue: While there are numerous organizations providing information on health care reform, two are particularly helpful to grassroots advocates who want to understand the issue without getting into the complex details.

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

Kaiser Family Foundation: <http://www.kff.org>

**Seeking Justice in Health Care:
A Guide for Advocates in Faith Communities**

An 80-page resource that provides an overview of U.S. health care and the options for reform through the lens of justice. Copies may be ordered in print and online versions at <http://www.faithfulreform.org>.