



National Council of Churches Health Care Alert



“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help and you will not listen?” (Habakkuk 1:2)
Then the Lord answered me and said, “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it.” (Habakkuk 2:1-2)

The National Council of Churches, especially through its Committee on Families and Children, and the Health Task Force, senses that our nation’s cry for dependable, affordable health care for all people is growing in volume and strength. Like the prophet Habakkuk, we believe we hear God’s injunction to “write the vision plain...” In response, we are committed to work for a straight forward approach that honors all persons and is sustainable by both individuals and society. Each month we will provide updated information on health care policy reform along with information about what congregations can do to help.

Right now is the time [the child's] bones are being formed, his blood is being made, and his senses are being developed. To him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow.' His name is 'Today.'”

Chilean poet -Gabriela Mistral

Every child and family has a right to guaranteed quality, comprehensive health care. For nearly nine million children, the lack of coverage today affects their tomorrows.

- The child's developing brain, physical growth and mental health lay the foundation for their adult capabilities. Poor health endangers a child's wellbeing today and puts tomorrow's in question.
- The need for coverage starts with early and regular prenatal care for the mother. Every year, around 750,000 pregnant women are uninsured, putting their unborn children at risk today and threatening their tomorrows.
- Almost 6 million of uninsured children are eligible for health coverage under Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) but are not enrolled. Barriers to enrollment today puts tomorrow's health at risk.
- Whether and what kind of coverage and benefits a child receives today depends on the state in which he or she lives. Moving today may mean tomorrow's health is jeopardized.
- Almost a quarter of two-year-olds are not fully immunized. Vulnerability to childhood diseases is today's threat. For many children, the damaging effects of a preventable disease may be tomorrow's legacy.
- For children who are uninsured, the majority of whom are U.S. citizens living in two-parent families with at least one parent who works, a delay in health care coverage means a vulnerable childhood. To these children, we cannot answer "Tomorrow". Their names are "Today".
Statistics, Children's Defense Fund

What Can We Do?

In the midst of a tumultuous economic and political context, we must not lose sight of the importance of health and wellness.

Pray for the health of children and families **today**.

Find out **today** about the health and wellness of children in your community. Talk with others about what you can do.

Contact your public officials **today**. Let them know that health coverage for all, but especially for children, is the highest priority.

Evaluate the candidates' platforms on health coverage **today**. Decide which candidates support policies that will ensure high quality, affordable health coverage for all.