

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- **Universal Access**
Universal access is fundamental to a reformed health care system.
- **Standard Benefits**
A standard benefit package for persons living and working in Pennsylvania must be guaranteed.
- **Delivery Reform**
Delivery reform requires a team effort coordinated among providers.
- **Expenditure Control**
Responsible health care reform requires credible expenditure control.
- **Long-Term Care**
A continuum of long-term care services should be included as an integral part of the benefit package.
- **Mental Health and Behavioral Health**
A standard benefit package includes mental and behavioral health parity.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Health care reform shall result in a system that includes:

- The inherent right of people to have access to adequate health services.
- Delivery of health care that respects human dignity and the religious destiny of a person.
- Participation by all types of providers in providing access to care.

- Allocation of health care resources based upon community needs and which emphasizes primary care, health promotion and disease prevention.
- Incentives for individuals to practice good health.
- Effective measures to ensure appropriate utilization and quality of services.
- Adequate, equitable, risk-adjusted, timely and predictable payments to health care providers.
- Use of a universal claims form.
- Streamlined administration.
- Promotion of the efficient and cost-effective use of facilities, equipment, and services with less duplication and competition, and greater provider cooperation.
- Provision for support of education, training, and ethical and moral research.
- Standards by which these objectives can be measured.

RESOURCES

A reformed health care system should use the cooperative resources of both the public and private sectors, the voluntary, religious and nonprofit sectors.

The Pennsylvania Catholic Health Association (PCHA), a statewide organization composed of Catholic hospitals, nursing homes, and other individuals, groups, and organizations, fulfills its mission in support of the Catholic health ministry through Gospel witness, advocacy, communications, networking, education, and united action. PCHA is closely aligned with the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC), the Catholic Church's public affairs agency, serving in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Contact: Sister Clare Christi Schiefer, OSF, President
223 North Street, PO Box 2835, Harrisburg, PA 17105
717-238-9613
(2007)

www.pacatholic.org/pcha

A Vision for

HEALTH CARE REFORM

by the
Catholic Church
in Pennsylvania



The Pennsylvania Catholic Conference and the Pennsylvania Catholic Health Association envision a reformed health care system that provides universal access to quality comprehensive care with reasonable cost control. A fundamental commitment to the sanctity and dignity of human life is basic to any reformed health care system. In this reformed system, there must be a special concern for the poor and most vulnerable members of society. This system also honors the Catholic values of providers of health care services and individuals who receive these services.

The following Values and Essential Criteria serve as the framework for this reformed health care system.

VALUES

Health Care as a Ministry

Health care is a ministry based upon Christian charity and justice.

The delivery of health care is a service that is not simply a commodity exchanged for profit. While it is appropriate for health care entities to operate in a businesslike fashion, the provision of health care is a social good and a ministry to a community of persons.

Health Care and Human Dignity

Every person, including the poor and vulnerable, has a right to adequate health care, a right that flows from the sanctity of life and human dignity. The dignity of the human person requires pursuit of the common good. Created by God, each person has intrinsic spiritual worth and transcendent value.

The relevance of human dignity in contemporary America is reflected in a commitment to individual human rights. Our interpretation insists on universality and the right to adequate health care.

This also places a concomitant responsibility on the person to care for self.

Health Care and the Common Good

Human dignity is realized only in the context of community, or in association with others. A health care system must strive to serve the common good by benefiting each person as well as society at large.

- Public policy must ensure broad community participation in identifying health care needs, in establishing priorities to determine basic comprehensive benefits, and in creating standards and mechanisms for assessing the health care system's responsiveness to these priorities.
- To help promote the common good, the benefits provided should be sufficient to maintain and foster good health, and to treat disease and disability. Educational programs that encourage health and wellness should be mandatory components of the health care delivery system.
- Financing the delivery of comprehensive health care services is a societal obligation. The government must ensure that a financing mechanism will be based on an equitable formula.

Health Care and the Poor

A preferential option for the poor is countercultural to contemporary health care, yet it is fundamental to any health care reform policy. Charity and justice require that special attention be given to adequately meeting the health care needs of the poor. The health care provider community must be encouraged to continually advocate for, and be present to the poor in providing health care services.

Health Care and Stewardship

As a society, we have an obligation to use natural and social resources on behalf of all. We are challenged to be responsible stewards and not squander resources.

Responsible health care reform requires the exercise of stewardship, that is, the introduction of economic discipline into the health care delivery system and the creation of credible expenditure control. On the part of recipients of health care, it also requires the responsibility for learning to live a healthy lifestyle.

Justice demands that any redistribution of resources in a reformed system must be equitable, and fairly recognize the contribution and value of health care workers who supply this vital service.

The justice system must provide for the orderly, fair and efficient resolution of disputes arising from the delivery of health care services.

The structure and regulations for administration of the health care system must be simple, coherent, responsive and cost effective for provider and user, and should be monitored and evaluated on a timely basis.

Health Care and Ethical Norms

All persons have a right to adequate accessible health services. The right of all persons to the free exercise of their ethical and religious beliefs must be protected within the delivery and reform of the health system. A reformed health care system shall honor religious and ethical values of persons and institutions in the provision and reception of health care services.

Benefits must be provided that respect a fundamental commitment to the sanctity and dignity of human life.