

The National Council of the United States, Society of St. Vincent de Paul has worked with its Voice of the Poor Committee to develop a sound and thoughtful position for health care reform (<http://www.svdpusa.org/VoiceofthePoor/tabid/167/language/en-US/Default.aspx>) which was adopted by its national membership in 2004. This work is based on and guided by the Church's social and moral teachings and informed by pastoral letters prepared by the United States Bishops as well as through the guidance of Papal Encyclicals.

The basis for this vision of health care reform was captured recently in a letter to Congress on behalf of the United States Bishops written by Bishop William F. Murphy of the Diocese of Rockville Center: "The Bishops' Conference believes health care reform should be truly universal and should be genuinely affordable. ...Health Care is not just another issue for the Church or for a healthy society. It is a fundamental issue of human life and dignity. To see the complete text of this letter: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/2009-07-17-murphy-letter-congress.pdf>

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul USA has also worked closely with Catholic Charities USA and the Catholic Health Association. The Catholic Health Association developed a set of health care reform principles to guide our collective work in evaluating and supporting any legislation that leads to health care reform. These principles are that Health Care should be available and accessible to everyone especially the poor and the vulnerable, oriented toward health and prevention, fairly financed, transparent and consensus-driven, patient centered from conception to natural death, and provide the greatest possible quality.

Again, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul has not supported any particular or specific legislation; it has expressed its concern for the need for the U.S. Congress to deal with this most urgent need now.

"The Society of St. Vincent de Paul does not support nor will it support any legislation, provision or amendment that fails to uphold the sanctity and dignity of human life," said Joe Flannigan, the National President of the U.S. Society. "Further, we will continue to work with Catholic Health Association and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Charities USA to ensure that any legislation will continue to support the conscience clause protection to health care workers and that the Hyde exception continues to ensure no abortion can be funded with federal funds."