

June 25, 2017

My Dear Vincentians –

At the earliest possible moment, I urge you to either e-mail or call your US Senator to urge him or her to not support the just released Senate legislation which would decimate health care coverage for the poor and vulnerable – the very individuals, families and children we care so deeply about and minister to daily.

Time is of the essence. The vote on this piece of legislation is likely to occur this coming Thursday, and minds are being made up right now. By Wednesday, it will probably be too late, for if the bill is brought to the floor of the Senate it is likely there will be sufficient votes to pass it and the ostensible debate on the floor will be purely symbolic.

The Society has consistently maintained that the expanded health care coverage that the poor and vulnerable currently have not be rolled back. We understand that there are parts of the Affordable Care Act that warrant revision and improvement. Indeed, we join in the call for such changes. But neither the previously passed House version or this new version, re-branded as the “Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) of 2017,” do that. The BCRA does not even come close to adhering to the [“Ten Commandments of Health Care Coverage”](#) which the Society and many other faith-based organizations have developed to guide and measure proposed Federal legislation.

In short, here are key reasons why the legislation does not measure up, though there are many more, too:

- Around 25 million individuals are projected to lose coverage in the next 10 years.
- The Medicaid Expansion program, now in full operation in 31 states, would be phased out. This program addresses the critical health needs of the poor and vulnerable we serve in countless ways every day across the country. By legal definition, Medicaid Expansion covers those with incomes of 138% or less of the Federal Poverty Level, or, in other words, for a family of four an income of \$33,534 or less.
- The proposed legislation effectively rescinds the substantial advances we have made as a country in extending basic health care coverage to all, regardless of economic status. Such vital coverage has long been understood as a fundamental human and moral right in our Catholic Social Teaching tradition.

This is hardly the preferential option for the poor that we Vincentians take so seriously and live out so meaningfully in our ministry.

It is also worth noting that the Senate legislation, as you undoubtedly know from following the news, is being rushed through without any Senate committee hearings and no opportunity for meaningful public input. It was developed in secret, the details have only been released in the last few days, and independent parties, such as the Congressional Budget Office, have only days to evaluate it and make

their findings known. This is an exceptionally poor way to make policy on any public matter, let alone one with such consequences as this.

By clicking on the link below, you will be taken to a template e-mail message to electronically send to your Senator. You are encouraged to amend it and put it in your own words and add your personal story. Alternatively, at the end of my message to you is a phone number for you to use if you wish to call your Senator, along with a suggested message you can leave. Whichever method for communicating that you choose, do not delay.

Thank you for your prayerful and thoughtful consideration of this request to respond to the cry of the poor for health care coverage. Our inspiration is drawn from the story of the Good Samaritan, who, as you all recall, not only delivered the badly injured man to the inn but also gave the innkeeper instructions to care for him and money to cover the costs. We are today's Samaritans and innkeepers.

Yours in the social justice spirit of Frederic Ozanam,

Sheila Gilbert

President

Society of St. Vincent de Paul, National Council of the United State

Call your Senators at 1-888-738-3058 NOW to oppose the GOP health plan and protect Medicaid.

When you call, here's what you might say:

"Hi, my name is [NAME] and I am a constituent from [CITY/TOWN]. As a person of faith, I'm calling to oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act. I oppose any efforts to cut or cap Medicaid, and no one should lose coverage as a result of any healthcare replacement. Please protect the human dignity of the millions of Americans who would lose coverage and oppose the Better Care Reconciliation Act."*

**Also add your personal story!*

Then, when you're done, forward this email to all your friends so they can make their calls as well. *If you know anyone in **Alaska, Arizona, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, or West Virginia** forward this email to them -- it is ESPECIALLY important that they make their calls!*