



# Resolution on National Healthcare Policy: Next Step

## Action needed this week

Please consider contacting your congressional representatives to ask them to take action on healthcare access.

## Background

At Mennonite Church USA Convention 2009, delegates overwhelmingly approved a resolution encouraging congregations and members **"to urge their congressional representatives to support legislation that would extend access to healthcare to all Americans, particularly the poor and disadvantaged."** This resolution built on an earlier resolution adopted at Charlotte 2005, articulating our theology of healthcare access: "Because the scriptural test of a just nation is how it treats its weakest members (*Micah 6:8, Amos 5:24, Jeremiah 5:26-29*), we will be clear and consistent advocates to policymakers on behalf of public health matters and access to healthcare for everyone."

Both the House and Senate are currently debating legislation that would dramatically extend health insurance coverage to Americans who are uninsured or who will become uninsured in the future. The legislation also addresses concerns about healthcare costs and quality. The legislative debate is at a ►

critical point and the next few weeks will likely determine whether Congress will adopt reform legislation or not. Our resolution does not endorse any particular legislation or legislative solution. It does, however, focus on the key issue of extending access to health care, particularly for the weakest members of our society.

Thursday, July 23, Mennonite Church USA faxed a cover letter from Jim Schrag, Mennonite Church USA Executive Director, and our resolution to representatives and senators from areas with highly concentrated Mennonite populations. Now we need you to reinforce our request "to support legislation that would extend access to healthcare to all Americans, particularly the poor and disadvantaged."

## Facts

- The most recent Census data found that 45.7 million Americans (15.3% of the population) were uninsured in 2007.
- Disproportionately, African Americans and Hispanics were uninsured.
- Many more people are currently uninsured than were uninsured at the time of this report because of the economic downturn. A study released this week concluded that 2.3 million Americans are losing health insurance every year, 44,230 per week.
- Although the uninsured are not necessarily denied access to all healthcare, many studies have shown that the uninsured get less care and get it later when it is less effective.

Detailed information for writing your letter and additional resources:  
**[www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace](http://www.MennoniteUSA.org/peace)**