

## A Universal Right

*"Health is not a consumer good but a universal right, so access to health services cannot be a privilege."*

*-Pope Francis*



Throughout the Gospels, Jesus restores health and well-being to the sick, and teaches us that when we care for those who are ill, we are caring for Him. For centuries, Catholic hospitals, religious congregations and individuals have done exactly that.

For decades, the Church has also been advocating that health care is a human right. From Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* to repeated calls from subsequent pontiffs and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Social Teaching is clear that universal access to health care is a necessary part of respect for the dignity of human life.



*Physicians St. Luke and St. Joseph Moscatti, pray for all those who lack decent health care.*



St. Joseph Moscatti  
Doctor, Scientist & Professor  
1880 - 1927  
Memorial - 16 November

In the United States, we have not yet developed a system that ensures equal access to high quality, affordable health care for all. Currently the U.S. Senate faces the task of addressing this vitally important issue, following passage by the House of Representatives of the American Health Care Act.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a press [statement](#) in response which read in part:

*Since discussions about repealing the Affordable Care Act began, the U.S. Bishops have repeatedly called for Congress to honor key moral principles in health care reform. Among them are: access for all people to comprehensive, quality health care that is truly affordable, including extra consideration for pre-existing conditions; respect for life by preventing the use of federal funds for abortion or to purchase health care plans that cover it; and conscience protections...*

*"When the Senate takes up the AHCA, it must act decisively to remove the harmful proposals from the bill that will affect low-income people—including immigrants—as well as add vital conscience protections, or begin reform efforts anew. Our health care policy must honor all human life and dignity from conception to natural death, as well as defend the sincerely-held moral and religious beliefs of those who have any role in the health care system," said Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, Chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.*

In keeping with our Catholic belief in the preferential option for the poor (which can be summed up by saying that the needs of the poor must take precedence over the wants of the well-off), we must speak out to our Senators on this issue.

The Catholic Health Association has posted a petition opposing the House version of the AHCA here [www.chausa.org/advocacy/contact-congress#/54](http://www.chausa.org/advocacy/contact-congress#/54). You can also call the Capitol Switchboard at **(202) 224-3121** and ask to speak to Sen. Schumer's and Sen. Gillibrand's offices.



“The mission of CHA is to advance the Catholic health ministry of the United States in caring for people and communities.

Catholic health care is a ministry of the Catholic Church continuing Jesus' mission of love and healing in the world today. Comprised of more than 600 hospitals and 1,400 long-term care and other health facilities in all 50 states, the Catholic health ministry is the largest group of nonprofit health care providers in the nation.”

You can edit the CHA's online petition to express your individual thoughts. When you read it you'll learn more about the CHA's critique of the ACHA stemming from the proposed changes in Medicaid funding and for provisions that the CHA analyzes would make health insurance coverage less affordable and accessible to people with pre-existing or chronic conditions.

## Dèyè Mòn, Gen Mòn... Behind the Mountains, There are Mountains

This Haitian proverb reminds us that struggles follow upon struggles. Now is the time to speak out for Haitians in the U.S. who are still struggling to provide for their families after their homeland was devastated by the 2010 earthquake.

*From the Justice for Immigrants Campaign of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops...*

“An estimated 58,000 Haitians are at risk of having their Temporary Protected Status (TPS) terminated by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). TPS allows these individuals to temporarily remain in the United States and support themselves legally while Haiti is being rebuilt.

**Haitians with TPS  
contribute \$280 mill/year  
to the US GDP.  
We value their  
contributions!**

**#SaveTPS**

*From the  
New York  
Immigration  
Coalition*

Haiti is still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Matthew, which struck in October 2016 and is said to be the nation's largest humanitarian emergency since the 2010 earthquake. Additionally, Haiti is plagued with a severe cholera epidemic and food shortages. Given these persistent conditions, terminating TPS would be inhumane and untenable. Unfortunately, there are reports that certain high-level government officials are recommending that TPS be terminated for Haitians.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS) **strongly opposes the termination of TPS for Haiti.” You can speak out for Haitians here:**

[www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

**We shouldn't turn our backs on people in need.**

Haiti is still recovering from:

- natural disasters
- a housing shortage
- a cholera epidemic
- food instability
- a weakened economy

Extend Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haitian families. **#SaveTPS**

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