



Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange Congregational Stance
on Health Access
July 1993

Whereas we believe in the inherent dignity of the person and that health care is essential for human dignity and therefore a basic human right (US Bishops, 1981 pastoral letter, "Health and Health Care");

Whereas there is a crisis of health care in the United States for nearly 100 million Americans have no or inadequate health insurance (Families USA Foundation);

Whereas health care in the United States is more costly while providing less service than other major industrialized country (Judith Feder: Health System Leadership Conference, 1992);

Whereas health care delivery is inadequate or not available for many working poor, for Hispanics, for African Americans, for those living in rural areas and for many with special needs such as mental illness, longterm care, pre-natal care (Health Progress: April 1993);

Whereas expenditures on health care has been growing from 6% of the GDP in 1965 at a rate that they will reach 18% by the year 2000 (CHA: Congressional Budget Office);

Whereas health care costs rose 7% in 1992 while other basic costs rose 1.5-3% (Families USA: Senior Watch);

Whereas in California more than half of two year old children are inadequately immunized; children's tuberculosis has risen 79% in the last six years; and 2.1 million children (25%) have no medical coverage- public or private (Children Now);

Whereas even in 1989, in 20 of California's 58 counties there were no obstetricians who would treat pregnant women on Medi-Cal (Health Access Foundation);

Whereas "programs for the poor too often become poor programs" (CHA: "Setting Relationships Right");

Whereas we believe that, because it is a basic right, the ultimate responsibility for access to basic health care is that of government (St. Joseph Health System: "Access to Basic Health Care Services");

Whereas we are called to a preferential option for the poor;

Be it resolved that the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange call on the government of the United States to enact a program of health care which will serve all residents of the United States irrespective of culture,



race, gender, creed, health or disability status, age, sexual orientation, income, geography (urban or rural) or legal status.

Be it further resolved that the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange advocate for a program with effective processes:

- to determine basic benefits which are sufficiently comprehensive to include prevention and appropriate treatment for disease and disability, and long term care, assuring that all persons receive the same scope of services;

- to develop a cost-sharing financing mechanism which is equitable and progressive;

- to allocate resources equitably and efficiently thereby guaranteeing universal access to care;

- to contain costs through establishing ceilings, eliminating costly duplication of service and administrative processes, and developing alternatives to address malpractice situations and issues;

- to provide for quality improvement and for determining the appropriate levels of technological advances;

Be it further resolved that the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange advocate for a program that respects cultural diversity and protects the right of ethical and religious beliefs in the provision and reception of health services.