

SCLHS

Sisters of Charity
of Leavenworth
Health System

Health Policy Platform

Access to health care for all must be vigorously and thoughtfully pursued through meaningful reform in the way health care is delivered and paid for in this country.

SCLHS Statement of Principles on Health Reform 2009

Our Mission: We will, in the spirit of the Sisters of Charity, reveal God's healing love by improving the health of the individuals and communities we serve, especially those who are poor or vulnerable.

We Support Health Care Coverage for All:

- We support reform of the insurance market to allow universal access to reliable, quality health coverage.
- We support mandates to achieve universal coverage, building on the employer-based system with appropriate assistance for the poor through premium subsidies and expansion of government programs.
- We support an insurance exchange, but oppose a public plan option or co-ops which compete through inadequate provider reimbursement (reducing access), inferior benefits, and/or government subsidization.
- We support shared responsibility for health and wellness, utilizing medical homes and a community-based health approach to help people learn and care more about their own health.

We Support Delivery System Transformation that improves quality of care, patient outcomes, and efficiency:

- We recognize that the costs of health care are accelerating – affecting jobs and our economy – and providers must be held accountable for the quality and affordability of the care they deliver.
- We urge the gradual restructuring of health delivery incentives and alignment of physician and hospital payments to reward quality and efficiency, as opposed to fee-for-service and volume of procedures.
- We are prepared to pilot innovative payment reforms through Medicare, such as a hospital readmissions policy, value-based purchasing, and a bundled payments system, but oppose arbitrary reductions to reimbursement rates or payment reforms which will reduce access to services.
- We support medical homes and accountable care organizations as catalysts for change in coordination of care.
- We oppose dismantling of programs that defray costs to providers of uncompensated care, such as Disproportionate Share Hospital payments, as long as there are uninsured still needing services.

- We support research on comparative effectiveness and information-driven care to improve patient outcomes rather than as a tool for reimbursement decisions.
- We support government action to promote participation and investment in health information technology and to facilitate standardization to make technology as useful as possible.
- We support limitations on physician self-referral, but urge revision of Stark and anti-kickback laws which impede new provider partnerships, block innovative care delivery models, and prevent health information sharing.
- We urge amendment of federal and state anti-trust laws which make it difficult for hospitals and doctors to collaborate to improve care coordination across settings as well as reduce costly duplication of services.
- We support responsible and sustainable reforms that achieve savings to balance the new costs of expanding coverage, reduce wasteful spending and “bend the cost curve” while improving community health.
- We support existing tax-exempt policy for charitable health care organizations that demonstrate community benefit.
- We support reforms to the medical malpractice system in order to reach an appropriate balance, assuring fair compensation for medical injuries but controlling frivolous lawsuits that force “defensive medicine” and add unnecessarily to health care costs.

We support Preservation of Provider Conscience Protections and an "Abortion Neutral" Approach:

- Longstanding and widely supported policies protecting provider conscience rights must be preserved. As faith-based providers of care, these protections go to the heart of what we do and why we do it.
- Federal funds should not be used for abortion, and no benefit package should be mandated to cover abortion.



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