

## **MAKING HEALTHCARE REFORM OUR MORAL OBLIGATION:**

### **CRITERIA FOR REFORM:**

- 1) INCLUSIVITY\*
- 2) AFFORDABILITY\*
- 3) ACCESSIBILITY\*
- 4) ACCOUNTABILITY\*

### **4 STEPS FOR US:**

- 1) BECOME AWARE
- 2) TALK WITH OTHERS
- 3) GIVE SERMON/LESSON
- 4) DEVELOP PASTORAL SELF

### **ONLINE RESOURCES:**

#### **[Union for Reform Judaism's Health Care Initiative page:](http://urj.org/socialaction/issues/healthcare/)**

<http://urj.org/socialaction/issues/healthcare/>

#### **[The Kalsman Institute: A wonderful wealth of resources](http://huc.edu/kalsman/HealthcareSystem/) – Go to their resources section for an incredible and helpful sample sermon by Rabbi Don Goor**

<http://huc.edu/kalsman/HealthcareSystem/>

#### **[Faithful Reform in Healthcare:](http://faithfulreform.org/)**

\*Lists the four criteria for evaluating healthcare reform, as called upon by the Faithful Reform in Healthcare group.

<http://faithfulreform.org/>

#### **[Religious Action Center](http://jewsforhealthcarereform.org/) – The RAC's current healthcare reform advocacy**

<http://jewsforhealthcarereform.org/>

#### **[Organizing for America – An online forum for individuals to share their healthcare stories](http://stories.barackobama.com/healthcare/)**

<http://stories.barackobama.com/healthcare/>

#### **[The Hastings Center](http://www.thehastingscenter.org/publications/primers/default.aspx?id=3528) – A healthcare blog that has run a series on connecting American values with health reform**

<http://www.thehastingscenter.org/publications/primers/default.aspx?id=3528>

**<http://www.healthreform.gov/>** - the current administration's website to update new developments in health care reform.

### **ARTICLES/STORIES:**

#### **[Rabbi Elliott Dorff's article on the Jewish support for Universal Health Care,](http://www.jewishjournal.com/articles/print/why_we_must_support_universal_health_care_20090826/)**

August 26, 2009:

[http://www.jewishjournal.com/articles/print/why\\_we\\_must\\_support\\_universal\\_health\\_care\\_20090826/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/articles/print/why_we_must_support_universal_health_care_20090826/) - an article in the Jewish journal

**[“On Health Care: Our Fundamental Principles.” By Elissa D. Barrett,](http://forward.com/articles/114888/)** executive director of the Progressive Jewish Alliance, September 23, 2009

<http://forward.com/articles/114888/>

**[“Medical Bills Prompt More than 60% of U.S. Bankruptcies.”](http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/06/05/bankruptcy.medical.bills/)** CNN, June 5, 2009

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/06/05/bankruptcy.medical.bills/>

## **Jewish Textual Sources Applied to Health Care Reform**

Selections from the URJ's website. For more, visit:

[http://urj.org//socialaction/issues/healthcare//?syspage=article&item\\_id=1836](http://urj.org//socialaction/issues/healthcare//?syspage=article&item_id=1836)

### TANAKH

If one person is able to save another and does not save him he transgresses the commandment, "Neither shall you stand idly by the blood of your neighbor" (Lev 19:16).

Therefore choose life that you and your descendants may live (Deu. 30:20).

You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. (Ezekiel 34:4).

### TALMUD

Whoever is in pain, lead him to the physician (Baba Kamma 46B).

Whenever a poor young scholar came to him for medical advice, Abba would not only treat him without charging, he would also give the young man some money and say, "Here, use this to regain your strength." (B. Talmud, Ta'anit, page 21b)

A doctor who heals for nothing is worth nothing (B. Talmud, Baba Kamma 85a).

### MEDIEVAL COMMENTATORS

It is obligatory from the Torah for the physician to heal the sick and this is included in the explanation of the phrase and you shall restore it to him, meaning to heal the body. (Moses Maimonides's Commentary on Mishnah Nedarim 4:4)

God created food and water; we must use them in starving off hunger and thirst. God created drugs and compounds and gave us the intelligence necessary to discover their medicinal properties; we must use them in warding off illness and disease. (Moses Maimonide's Commentary on Mishnah Pesachim 4:9)

The Torah grants physicians permission to heal. Healing is, in fact, a religious duty that falls under the rules for saving a life. If a physician withholds treatment when he is able to give it, he is regarded as a murderer, even if there is someone else who can heal a patient, because it may be in this case it is the special merit of this physician to provide the healing for this patient. (Joseph Cara Code of Jewish Law chap 336, sec 1)

### MODERN/CONTEMPORARY COMMENTATORS

Medicine is prayer in the form of a deed...The body is a sanctuary, the doctor is a priest...The act of healing is the highest form of imitation of God (Abraham Joshua Heschel)

You may not in any way weaken your health or shorten your life. Only if the body is healthy is it an efficient instrument for the spirit's activity....Therefore you should avoid everything which might possibly injure your health.... And the law asks you to be even more circumspect in avoiding danger to life and limb than in the avoidance of other transgressions. (Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Horeb, Chapter 62, Section 428)