

# The COVID-19 Pandemic: Justice. Healing. Courage. 2021 Action of Immediate Witness

Unitarian Universalists are heartbroken. Three million people have died in the world and millions more endure poverty because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Lessons learned during the 2020-2021 plague force us to look at the American healthcare system. The extreme inadequacy and inequity in medicine and public health has been exposed. The current disorganized mix of private insurance and government programs has failed to cover and protect all US residents.

Some demographic groups are disproportionately disadvantaged. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) experience high infection, hospitalization and death rates because of COVID-19. The elderly and people with disabilities have been hit especially hard. The medical needs of LGBTQ+ people have often been ignored. Lower-income communities and front-line workers have been exposed to health and safety hazards while lacking adequate protection, representation and medical insurance.

We want systemic change. Unitarian Universalists recognize the need to build just and equitable infrastructures for medical care and public health, in labor and community organizing, and in congregation-based programs for social and personal wellness.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this General Assembly affirms its commitment to create a healthcare system that is accessible, comprehensive, equitable and culturally acceptable. We agree with the World Health Organization that health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

On March 17, 2021, Reps. Pramila Jayapal and Debbie Dingell introduced The Medicare for All Act of 2021 - PNHP; we urge letters to Representatives to join the current 116 co-sponsors of this landmark legislation.

Congregations are on the frontlines in healthcare. We ask the Unitarian Universalist Association to continue its good work in developing congregation-based programs for mutual aid, education, advocacy, healing and wellness. Global problems require global solutions. We ask the US government to work with the World Health Organization and other agencies to make vaccinations and essential medical services available to all people in all nations.

We are concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic, the recovery period and future emergencies. National problems require constitutional, legislative and executive solutions. The state of healthcare, pandemic prevention, socio-economic disparity and labor practices in the United States requires fully-funded Federal Study Commissions and implementation. We ask the Unitarian Universalist Association, our congregations, social justice organizations and interfaith partners to work together to research and demand Federal solutions.

We are grateful for the healthcare workers, teachers and social workers, food and transportation workers, and many others who have cared for people during recent emergencies. All workers need adequate protection, compensation and representation. We support the intent of the PRO Act, HR-842, Protecting the Right to Organize, for labor law reform and advocate its passage.