



Receiving Unity, Giving Witness

May 20, 2015

Dear Faith Leader,

If ever there is a moment when our advocacy matters, now is it.

Between three and six of Florida neighbors die daily. Together, Floridians can prevent their deaths. Our neighbors are dying prematurely because they can't afford to go to the doctor for treatment. They fall into a coverage gap, even though money is there for their health care coverage. Florida lawmakers just have to accept the taxes already collected to fund health care for those in the coverage gap.

Over the last two years experts and editorial writers have made the case for extending coverage. The business community feels the costs of withholding coverage and knows the thousands of jobs coverage will create is good business. Faith leaders have prayed with legislators. But these voices haven't been enough to move lawmakers to act.

The voices that are needed are in our congregations. Our members have to be heard like the Good Samaritan who took the half dead victim to the local inn and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' We each have to tell our own Florida representative to take care of our neighbors who need health care coverage. We've already paid the taxes for the coverage; now they need to extend coverage to the 830,000 who fall in the coverage gap.

Lawmakers need to hear from us now before they return to a special session in Tallahassee beginning June 1. They are home in their districts. They need to know that the health of our neighbors matters to us. Our neighbors without health care coverage are moms and dads, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. They attend our house of worship with us. They are family, and as people of faith, we don't let family die, especially when the provisions exist to save them.

I've created a special website, www.interfaithflorida.org, for those who care about the health of our neighbors to send a letter directly to their Florida Representative and Senator. Please urge people in your houses of worship to use the website to contact their lawmakers this month. There will also be social media campaigns available on the website.

I'm also talking with community leaders about holding special events, press conferences and prayer vigils over the next two weeks. We need people to come out to them. Such public events generate real movement for positive political action. They will be announced on the website.

The New Testament says God sends the Spirit to be our advocate, to speak up for us, and indeed, we are sent to be an advocate in the world, to speak up for and with those society leaves behind. Let us take up our role as advocates earnestly for the healing of others depends on our united voices.

Please let me know how I can help you get this message of compassion out in your religious body. Surely we are,

Blessed to be a blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Russell L. Meyer".