

Hon. Felipe Fuentes, Chair  
Assembly Committee on Appropriations  
Re: S. B. 56 (Support)

Dear Mr. Fuentes:

I am writing to convey the strong support of the Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry Action Network for SB 56 (Alquist) -- Health Plans: Joint Ventures. This bill would authorize counties with Knox-Keene health plans to form joint ventures, thus enabling them to pool risks and share provider networks. Such joint ventures would be required to pursue contracts with designated public hospitals, county health clinics, community health centers, and other safety net providers. There are currently three types of county level health delivery modes which serve Medi Cal recipients: County Operated Health Systems (COHS), Two Plan Models and Geographic Managed Care (GMC). Additionally, the County Medical Services Program (CMSP) covers indigent adults up to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) ineligible for Medi Cal.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith affirms the following Guiding Principles:

- 1) Good Health is essential for all life.
- 2) Access to affordable, quality health care is a fundamental human right.

Also see below the "*UULM-CA Principles on Healthcare Reform.*"

Unitarian Universalists in our 70 congregations across California have participated in advocacy for healthcare reform legislation, writing over 1000 letters to our representatives and senators, attending rallies, and making numerous congressional visits and phone calls. The bill exemplifies the kinds of healthcare reforms our Unitarian Universalist principles endorse. It strengthens the social safety net for our most economically vulnerable citizens.

Your support for S. B. 56 will make a difference in the lives of low income Californians. In this key area of health, the California Legislature is in an important position to enact model legislation which will strengthen health care and make the promise of health care reform real in the lives of California citizens. California's implementing legislation will also be widely copied across the nation. We urge your support for this important legislation and request your hard work bringing it to the Governor's desk this year.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Lindi Ramsden, Executive Director

## *UULM-CA Principles on Healthcare Reform*

### **Our Unitarian Universalist Faith is grounded in:**

- **justice, equity and compassion for all people.**
- **respect for the inherent dignity of the individual and the interdependence of all life.**
- **the free and responsible search for truth and meaning.**
- **and the essential role of transparent democratic processes in reaching just and responsible decisions.**

### **And our Faith affirms the following Guiding Principles:**

- 1. good Health is essential for all life.**
- 2. access to affordable, quality health care is a fundamental human right.**

### **GIVEN THESE PREMISES WE COVENANT TO WORK TOWARD REACHING THE FOLLOWING GOALS:**

**1 UNIVERSAL COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CARE COVERAGE:** Ensure access to quality health care and coverage at affordable costs for all Californians. We hold as essential the provision of Quality Universal Healthcare with coverage for all members of our community. Coverage should include the most vulnerable (who are least able to inform and participate in public policy); including children and students, very low, low and moderate wage employees (irrespective of documentation status), people seeking employment, people with “pre-existing conditions,” the homeless, and those with special disabilities, rare diagnoses and chronic illness. This quality healthcare should also be comprehensive, including medical, dental, vision, mental health and prescription services.

**2 INSURER OVERSIGHT:** Establish oversight including stronger rules regulating insurers to elevate standards for coverage that preserve and increase consumer protections for all Californians.

**3 LARGE PURCHASING POOLS FOR ALL** that allow consumers to share risk, as opposed to efforts to shift risk and place financial burdens and barriers on individual consumers and families.

**4 SINGLE PAYER INSURANCE SYSTEM:** Work towards the development of a non-profit single payer system, which dramatically cuts administrative waste for both providers and patients alike.

**5. PRESERVATION OF OUR SAFETY NETS: including community and public health clinics, mental health and dental clinics, and public hospitals on which we all rely, especially people who are left out of the system and without coverage.**

**6. SUPPORT FOR BOTH THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING of the population, including an emphasis on preservation of health and prevention of illness.**

**7. COST CONTAINMENT: Support cost containment focused on prevention, safety, efficiency, transparency, and group purchasing so that consumers pay less and get more.**

**8. DIVERSITY AND EQUITY: Meet the specific needs of the full diversity of California, toward equity and access for all.** Any health care system should include language accessibility and address cultural diversity.

**STRATEGIC STEPS: Given that the existing private, for profit health care insurance system has failed to satisfy these principles, and since other systems in other countries are providing a broader coverage at lower cost and have better indices of population health, the benefit of their experience should be incorporated in our move forward. Urgent reform should be undertaken toward the goal of a comprehensive, universal health system, like Medicare for all.**

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*We pledge to do the following:*

*Educate our congregations about these points, collaborate with others to achieve these aims, promote reform and advocate assertively for these principles.*

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