



Health and Health Care

As far back as 1962 the RA called for a plan “to bring medical care to the aged under social security” and to enact what would become the Medicare program showing its commitment to universal health care for the elderly. This was the period in the United States where health insurance was provided to the majority of full-time workers in the country. As both defined pension benefits and near-universal health care coverage declined in the United States the Rabbinical Assembly began to call for the establishment of a national health care program to cover all Americans, as articulated in the document the Public Policy Commission of the Conservative Movement submitted to the Democratic and Republican parties in 1992.

In 1987 the Rabbinical Assembly called upon members to demonstrate compassion and understanding for those affected by HIV/AIDS, including through *bikkur holim* and protesting discrimination in areas such as medical attention, insurance, and housing. It also called on Conservative institutions to “provide spiritual and psychological support” and to educate members about prevention and proper care. A 1991 resolution declared that “the refusal by a rabbi to minister to a person with AIDS or to the family of such a person is a *Hillul Hashem*.”

In 1985, 1990, and 1996, the Rabbinical Assembly passed resolutions supporting the halakhic permissibility and praiseworthiness of organ and tissue donations, and encouraged its members to educate others on the topic.

The Rabbinical Assembly has supported reproductive freedom and easily accessible health care resources to that effect. In 1993 the RA called for law enforcement agencies to “insure the safety and physical well-being of doctors and other health care professionals who work with family planning agencies and clinics.” This sentiment was reaffirmed in 1999, and in 2007 the RA resolved to “support full access for all women to the entire spectrum of reproductive healthcare, and to oppose all efforts by federal, state, local or private entities or individuals to limit such access.”

In 1999, the Rabbinical Assembly published its “Rabbinic Letter on the Poor” by Elliot Dorff under the leadership of the Social Action Committee. This letter called for our society to provide basic health care to all. The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards passed a teshuvah affirming this principle and the RA passed a resolution in supporting the letter’s recommendations for alleviating poverty.

In 2002, the Rabbinical Assembly passed a resolution calling on the US government to increase its funding for health care for the poor and expanding the CHIP and S-CHIP programs to cover minor children, especially those whose parents have lost their health insurance benefits.

In light of employers reducing health benefits and rising unemployment causing the elimination of health cover for many Americans, in 2008 the Rabbinical Assembly expressed its grave concern about this issue and called on the United States government to establish affordable health care for all Americans and to expand access to health insurance.



The Rabbinical Assembly has signed onto numerous letters urging the US government to provide affordable and accessible health care for all of its citizens.

In 2011, the Rabbinical Assembly passed a resolution supporting the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 and expressing its disappointment that the United States House of Representatives passed the “Repealing the Job-Killing Health Care Law Act.” In the 2012 “Resolution Affirming the Need for Socio-Economic Justice in Federal Budget Prioritization in the US” the RA reiterated the need to ensure “continued benefits for a range of social services including Medicare, Medicaid, nutrition assistance (SNAP), [and] child health care (CHIP)” for those in need.