



Personal Witness: A Vincentian Face Gives Intimate Meaning to the Health Care Coverage Threat

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As the future of health care coverage in America rages in Washington with proposals, counterproposals, assertions, and statistics wildly bandied about, it is easy to lose sight of the faces and lives of those who would be impacted as we race to keep pace with the latest.

That's why the following personal witness from Kelly Anderson, a Vincentian in Idaho, is both so powerful and meaningful. In her message below, she describes what Medicaid coverage meant to her and her husband when he suffered a recent stroke, and how she has translated that individual experience into even stronger advocacy for the poor and marginalized who we all serve as Vincentians.

***From Kelly Anderson -
St. Vincent de Paul Society, Voice of the Poor Committee Chair, Boise, Idaho***

My Personal Story of Health Care Witness

This past Saturday, I attended a rally in downtown Boise against the Senate health care bill, now known as the Better Care Reconciliation Act, and in support of health care for all.

The turnout was from all walks of life. There was a minister, a kidney donor recipient, teens, college age students, children and parents, as well as representatives from many of our health care facilities. In short, there was participation from infant to senior citizens. This is so very wonderful to see as each and everyone there would be affected by the Senate health care bill – and not in a good way.

What I saw and heard were Americans from Idaho coming together to speak with one voice to say what we all know and that is that our state and national government officials need to listen to us! We do not speak “party” language. We speak to the issues and tell them these bills as they stand will do irreparable harm to the poor and marginalized.

I want to share a bit of a personal story. My husband recently had a stroke. Thankfully, it was minor and he is recovering, but the reason for this is because he has insurance – Medicaid – which allowed him to be on medication that kept his stroke, due to his having atrial fibrillation, from being worse. He spent one day in the hospital and then came home. Then came the bills:

✓	Ambulance:	Approx. \$1,600	We paid \$224
✓	2nd Hospital 1 day Stay	Approx. \$20,000	We paid \$250

✓Emergency Room We paid \$75

I can tell you that having insurance is a blessing. And I can add that I will stand and march and attend rallies so that all Americans can have the chance to have health care coverage.

In closing let me say: if we, as Vincentians, truly see Christ in the face of those we serve, then don't we have an obligation to stand for each and every human whom we haven't yet seen but still know that Christ shines in their eyes also.

Kelly's personal story is a vivid reminder of why we care. She gives us a face to replace the numbers and the complicated plans and details. And her advocacy by marching in a rally is an example of another way we as Vincentians can live out our calling to provide charity and seek justice for those in need.

Though the proposed Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA) appears as a result of developments this week in the Senate to no longer be viable, continued awareness of the implications any legislative change to the Affordable Care Act may have on the poor and marginalized is imperative. New ideas are already being floated in Congress which could have even more severe effects on the poor and marginalized than the BCRA. Vigilance remains essential.

We remember that Frederic Ozanam began his ministry by aiding a sick woman. How do we now live out our ministry in this time when the recent significant advances we have made as a country to ensure fundamental health care for all regardless of economic station in life – a long-established right of Catholic Social Teaching – remains under threat?

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