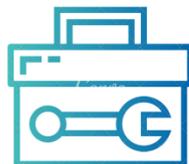


Be a Voice:

A Faith-Based Advocacy Toolkit for Health & Human Services



This toolkit is co-authored by staff from the United Church of Christ's
Council for Health and Human Service Ministries
and Justice and Witness Ministries.



The Council for Health and
Human Service Ministries
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST





Introduction

The United Church of Christ's Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHSM) and Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) have partnered together to bring you this advocacy toolkit for the November 2020 election. The advocacy issues raised here stem from the variety of services CHHSM organizations provide across the country. They were also topics CHHSM's board voted on to guide the organization in how to ['be a voice'](#) for social justice. Each month from January-September 2020, a new advocacy issue will be added to the toolkit:

January- Health Care for All

June- Food Insecurity

February- Affordable Housing & Homelessness

July- Services to Persons with Disabilities

March- Reproductive Healthcare

August- Healthcare Access

April- Children, Youth, and Families Services

September- Mental Health & Substance Use

May- Services to Older Adults

We recognize that this is not an all-inclusive list of the many advocacy areas within health and human services, yet we hope it will provide insight into the range of efforts important to the UCC.



A Note on Health Equity

Addressing these advocacy issues one at a time gives each topic the focused attention it needs. However, we understand these issues and others like them (ie: climate change and immigration reform) to intersect with and impact one another. We feel it is important to note that the services we are advocating for are connected to systemic problems and to the context in which they occur.

To this point, research shows that differences in community health can be traced to unequal economic and social conditions. Health inequities are rooted in past and current unjust policies. Yet as such, they can be changed. Creating health *equity* requires widening our understanding of health to include how a variety of factors, known as [social determinants of health](#), impact one's wellbeing and are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources. Examples include:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Income
- Class
- Neighborhood
- Housing
- Experience of discrimination
- Disability
- Employment and working conditions
- Gender
- Education
- Age
- Environment
- Sexual orientation & gender identity
- Sense of social inclusion
- Political empowerment.

Thus, for example, where you live, the quality of the education you receive, and experiences of racism can all contribute to your quality of health. This toolkit is written with the vision of health equity in mind- a vision which improves systemic conditions so that all people have the opportunity to attain their full health potential and where no one is kept from achieving this because of their social position or other socially determined circumstance.

To learn more about the UCC's stance and resources on health equity, please visit https://www.ucc.org/justice_health_health-equity_index.

