

National Black Church Initiative

P.O. Box 65177
Washington, DC 20035
202-744-0184
dcbci2002@yahoo.com
www.naltblackchurch.com

For immediate release

Contact Person
Rev. Anthony Evans
(202) 744-0184

PRESS RELEASE

National Black Church Initiative Urges Legislators to Pass President Obama's Healthcare Bill

NBCI urges all of its member churches to call congress

[The National Black Church Initiative](#) (NBCI), a coalition of 34,000 churches across the United States, strongly urges the Senate to work with President Barack Obama to pass a healthcare bill that features universal healthcare for all. We believe what the President has said: unless a comprehensive healthcare bill is passed, the current healthcare situation will ruin our country in every sector, regardless of race or station. NBCI believes that both parties should put politics aside, as this issue is far too important to the American people to be decided by political bickering.

We reject former Governor Howard Dean's analysis of the Senate's bill, even though he speaks the truth regarding competition and preventive care. African Americans cannot afford to play politics with their lives given the horrible health statistics that govern their existence. The bill that has been proposed in the Senate is a weak compromise due to the fact that there is no public option and no strong emphasis on prevention, but if a compromise is what is needed in order to reform healthcare then it must come to fruition. Sadly, this bill does not feature a mechanism that will truly help to close the health disparities gap in this country, but it is a good first step towards helping all receive access to quality healthcare – something NBCI believes is a God given right.

Because of this belief, NBCI is prompting all of its churches and congregants to exercise their constitutional right by calling into their Senator's and Congressmen's office and telling them to pass healthcare reform as soon as possible and support the President's initiative. NBCI is prompting all of its members to write in and express their support for the President's plan. NBCI is expressing its support for most of the ideas in the healthcare bills coming from the House and the Senate. This is no time to allow bi-partisan politics to steer our country, and while the Senate's bill does not have a public option in it, we must move forward in getting as many American's covered

as possible and close the health disparities gap that has been plaguing minority communities since the founding of the country.

Rev. Anthony Evans, President of NBCI, said, “I have issued a Presidential directive for all of our member churches and clergy to get in touch with their representative in Congress and urge them to pass healthcare reform before Christmas. Healthcare is a missing link to a stable and healthy life, and as clerics we cannot stand by and allow God’s children to suffer needlessly when it comes to access to care, the quality of healthcare delivery and a strong and vital preventive program that maintains health and wellness throughout a person’s life. We would be derelict in our duties as clergy if we did not support a comprehensive healthcare initiative offered by the President. Despite the critical elements missing from the bill, we have to, as men and women of God, consider healthcare a moral right and a part of the reason why Jesus have come: that we have life and health, and have it abundantly. We will not rest until we have a comprehensive healthcare bill that is signed by President Barack Obama.”

The health disparity gap has been a concern since before healthcare reform was ever discussed and will be an issue after healthcare reform occurs. On top of this, the current healthcare bill is far from a preventive plan, and addresses the health needs only of the sick and not of those trying to stay healthy. To this end, NBCI has declared a national health emergency in the Black community, and has begun to implement its Health Emergency Declaration (HED). HED is a seven year program which uses proven, science-based methods to educate the African American community in preventive healthcare. It is the goal of NBCI to help close the health disparities gap by educating the members of its 34,000 churches in how to live a healthier lifestyle. Doing so will save the Black community in America, and is one of the reasons it is so important for healthcare reform to take place.

Rev. Mark McCleary, Chair of NBCI’s Minister Alliance, said, “Since President Evans’ directions, I have been on the phone to all of our key clergy around the country to press upon them the need to call their Senators and Representatives to support the healthcare bill. The bill is critical to NBCI’s mission to eradicate health disparities, but is also critical to our calling from God to serve all of his children despite race, creed, sexual orientation or anything that would separate them and tell them that they are not special or a child of God.”

About NBCI

The National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), a coalition of 16,000 African-American and Latino member churches works to eradicate racial disparities in healthcare. In addition to our member churches, we have 18,000 sister churches. NBCI is a faith-based health organization dedicated to providing critical wellness information and preventive health screening to all of its members. The African-American community ranks first in eleven different health risk categories. NBCI’s purpose is to partner with national health officials to provide health education, reduce racial health disparities, and increase access to quality healthcare.