

Litany of Lament for Children's Health Care - (based on Jeremiah 8:18-9:1)

Leader: Every day, almost two thousand children are born in the United States without health insurance, and more than nine million children in our country are uninsured. Children without health insurance are less likely to see a doctor when they need one, and more likely to have worse health outcomes.

People: My joy is gone, grief is upon me, my heart is sick.

Leader: The United States is the wealthiest country in the world, and yet uninsured children don't have timely access to preventive services, diagnoses, or appropriate care. Uninsured children suffer needlessly. Many are handicapped for life because treatment is delayed.

People: Hark, the cry of my poor children from far and wide in the land: Is the LORD not in Zion? Is her King not in her?

Leader: As children headed back to school this year, too many didn't have the eye glasses, hearing aids, and health check ups they needed to learn and grow. Without adequate health care, children are less able to achieve their full potential. Uninsured children's reading scores have been shown to more than double after they received health insurance.

People: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Leader: Poor children are four times more likely to be uninsured than more affluent children. Children of color are almost three times as likely as White children to be uninsured.

People: For the hurt of my poor children I am hurt, I mourn, and dismay has taken hold of me.

Leader: Health care spending in the United States is far more per person than in other industrialized countries, yet we rank 24th out of 30 similar countries in infant mortality rate, and 22nd in low birth weight.

People: Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?

Leader: Too many political leaders say we can't afford to guarantee health care coverage for all children. Yet we could provide coverage for all children if we took the money for 16 days of military spending or 5 months of tax cuts for the wealthiest 1%. Why can't a nation with a \$13.3 trillion economy ensure health coverage to all its children? It's not a money problem; it's a lack of moral commitment.

People: O that my head were a spring of water, and my eyes a fountain of tears, so that I might weep day and night for the slain of my poor people!

Leader: Let us move from weeping to work. Let us provide the balm of health care, hope, and healing that all children need and deserve now.

All: Let us take this message to Washington on March 7th.

Adapted by Rev. Cory Sparks, PICO National Network, from the materials produced by the Children's Defense Fund