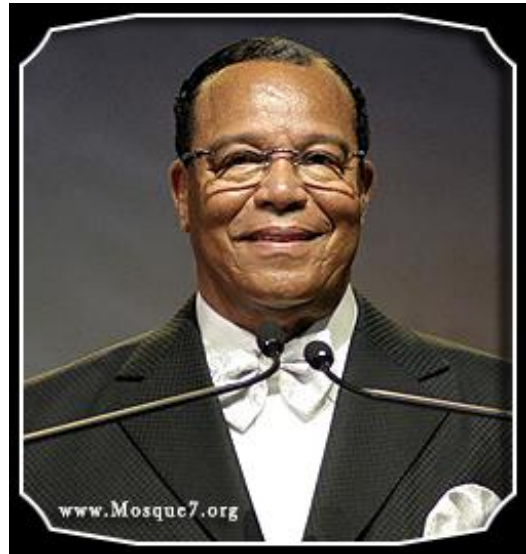


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Health by Minister Louis Farrakhan

Real health insurance comes from the diet and eating that which was unclean to eating that which is clean. That which is sanitary is that which is clean and that which is unsanitary is that which is unclean. What is the relationship between sanity and sanitarium, insanity and unsanitary? When you put that into the principle of justice, the more deprived of justice human beings are, the more insane or unclean they become. When you can live in filth then you encourage rats, cockroaches, flies and all things that are carriers of disease. So, one of the first things that the Honorable Elijah Muhammad enforced upon us was cleanliness and he said one day that he would like to form a committee of cleanliness to enforce cleanliness in the society. He said cleanliness is not next to Godliness; it is Godliness. So just helping our people to see the need for, and to get involved in the practice of being clean, will start then on the road to health and sanitary conditions.



The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan
Photo: Hannibal Muhammad

We were required to take a hot bath or a shower every day. We are required to put the best foods in our stomachs and therefore the Muslims countenance literally glowed. We never had prescription drugs in our bathroom cabinets. We hardly ever had a headache. We suffered from diabetes but we know how to master it. The key is not forcing government to give health care to the people. The key is providing the people with an internal force of enlightenment that allows the people with health care should they need it. But, if you are clean and you eat the proper foods and you try to take control of your thoughts then you are giving sane, and sanitary conditions to yourself and no matter what the government does or does not do, we give health to ourselves by what we do. The government said it was OK to drink alcohol. God said no and we stopped. The government said it was all right to smoke. God said no and we stopped. The doctors said eat three meals a day. God said no. We ate one meal a day and we got away from the forbidden swine and shell food that is improper. These are instructions to the people because what we represent is empowerment to the masses by giving the masses the knowledge of how to do for themselves rather than to depend on government, but the unity of the masses will give us the power to redirect government. Health is central to high quality of life. Good health requires both preventive measures and curative programs. Central to preventive measures is healthy food and healthy eating. Health is not simply the absence of disease; health is defined as a human right. At the federal level, managed care, social security and Medicare/Medicaid programs are in financial stress. Since medicine is big business and big government, the curative medicine programs contain all of the characteristics that challenge our survival, including racism and economic discrimination.

We must change our eating habits. Next, we must reduce the amount of junk food consumed by our children. Cigarette smoking is suicidal; the use of controlled substances also results in illness and death. Poor health contributes to lost income and unemployment.

We must address political issues involving health care with the same critical eye, the same energy and the same demand for equity that we reserve for the most important challenges to our survival

Health Care

The Three leading causes of death among Black people are heart disease, cancer and respiratory illness. Heart disease is the number one cause of death in the United States. In 1992, the death rate from heart disease for Black males was 45.8% higher than for White males. For Black females it was 69.2% higher. Also in 1992, death rates from strokes were two times higher for blacks than Whites.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women in the United States. Cervical cancer is also a serious problem. Black women are more likely to die from this disease than White women. Black men are twice as likely to die from prostate cancer than White men.

Action Items

Increase the level of Awareness about risk factors related to heart disease and stroke by collaborating with local community groups to develop a health component that will develop and implement educational activities tailored to meet the needs of community.

Increase access to awareness and promote adequate and affordable medical insurance coverage that will ensure early detection and treatment of service for Blacks and other minorities by supporting legislation to increase insurance portability and eliminate pre-existing conditions clauses. Also, mobilize grassroots organizations to support legislation prohibiting insurance or employment discrimination based on genetic testing or information.

Issue: Dismantling of Health Care Infrastructure

Policy decisions during the past 20-25 years, based on cost reduction, have gutted America's infrastructures. There has been a net loss of hospital beds, clinics and availability of health care. Forty-three to sixty million people are uninsured. Privatization of health care has victimized Black and other poor communities. Politicians have abdicated their responsibility. Excess death rates are soaring. Preventable illness is resurgent due to cost cutting. Support for concerned community-based doctors is paramount. On the rise is food contamination by way of chemical additives during the production process.

Issue: Health Parity - The net disinvestments and down-sizing of health care infrastructure increases the gap in health care outcomes. Black, Latino American and other Americans need more, not less, investment to produce more doctors, nurses and dentist. There is also a need for more medical schools, hospitals, and clinics.

Health Care: Improve Access in Poor Communities - Everyone should have access to basic health care. Minorities continue to suffer and die disproportionately from treatable diseases.

Background - African Americans and other minorities disproportionately suffer from preventable and treatable diseases. For example, African American men die from strokes at almost twice the rate of other men, and have a higher incidence of prostate cancer than any other group.

While the overall death rate due to breast cancer had declined, it has increased for African American women. In addition, African American infants are twice as likely as White babies to die before their first birthday. Diabetes also is more common among African Americans than Whites, with the highest rate among African American women.

Managed Care Reform

A. "Patient Bill of Rights" - The CHC will support legislation that: Facilitates access to emergency care to all people.

Ensures the privacy/confidentiality of all patients' records. Includes measures of accountability for health care providers to monitor adequate service to minorities.

B. Access to Specialist - Raise awareness of health care needs of minority communities not being addressed by managed care, including access to specialist. For instances, minority communities that suffer disproportionately from diabetes and cancers must have access to the appropriate medical treatment.

C. Restoration of Benefits for Legal Immigrants. Support Legislation that restores SSI, Medicaid and food stamps to legal immigrants.

Medicare Reform - Advocate for the inclusion of prescription drug coverage for all plans and not limit it to Medicare HMO's.

Support the expansion of eligibility to adults younger than 65 years old.

Advocate for Medicare reimbursements to health care providers in all the territories at a rate similar to that enjoyed by health providers in the states.

Long-Term Care

Support the \$1,000 tax credit to compensate for formal and informal long-term care for people of all ages with three or more limitations in activities of daily living.

Support the National Family Caregivers Program, which would assist families caring for elderly in our minority communities. With the decrease in payments to many health providers in our minority communities, we must look for alternatives in traditional health care.

Mental Health - Latino Americans suffer disproportionately from severe depression. Mental and substance abuse disorders come in many forms and include different diagnoses affecting millions of

individuals. Of those affected, Latino Americans have been found to have the highest rate of severe depression compared with Whites and other minority communities.

Support efforts by the administration to educate Americans on the need for quality, affordable mental health care, especially for our minority communities.

Support parity of mental health issues including drug and alcohol abuse.

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The lack of access to preventive care and inadequate treatment when care is provided account for the disparate impact on minorities health. Indeed, almost 31 percent of minority adults do not have any health insurance, compared to 14 percent of White adults. Minorities are twice as likely to have very little or no choice in where they obtain health care. They are also less likely to be satisfied with the quality of their care when they are fortunate enough to receive it.

Statement by The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan