

Virginia faith leaders comment on healthcare expansion

at a Jan. 11 news conference sponsored by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy



“Jesus’ commitment was so strong that at times he broke religious laws in order to give the gift of health. He particularly healed men, women and children who were poor and had no other chance to find healing. ... Closing the gap will cost the Commonwealth relatively little. It has the potential to bring jobs to the Commonwealth, to save hospitals in small communities and to help us better address the horrific opioid epidemic in Virginia.” – *The Rt. Rev. Susan Goff is Bishop Suffragan for the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia*

“It’s not a matter of politics, but a matter of faith, morality and conscience. Few times with- in a person’s life is an individual are presented with the opportunity to do something for the common good. To take an action that will so positively affect the lives of tens of thousands of people. ... This is one of those times.” – *The Rev. Tom Joyce, Assistant to the Bishop of the Virginia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church*



“Traveling around to our 1,079 churches, many of which have healthcare ministries, we see first-hand the challenge that people have. We find people working two or three jobs who still cannot afford health insurance. ... We realize that there is a great need to expand healthcare. There is no reason not to do it. We hope that our legislators will realize that they can do this, should do this which in many ways would be a core value to us, to proclaim the acceptable year of our Lord..” – *The Rev. Eli Burke, Baptist General Convention of Virginia*

“Genuine healthcare protects and heals these lives, each created in the likeness and image of God, each possessing a human dignity that cannot be measured. At its core, healthcare is for all, not a commodity that is within reach for some and out of reach for others. Virginia’s law- makers should seize the opportunity they have this year to close the coverage gap and affirm what healthcare truly is: not a privilege, but a right.” – *Mr. Jeff Caruso, Executive Director of the Virginia Catholic Conference*



“The Muslim community of Virginia believes that healthcare is an essential, basic human right. It’s not a matter of charity to extend healthcare to people who do not have it, it is an act of human decency. It reflects on our mortal status as citizens of Virginia. Having a healthy population is essential to every one of us. It’s a matter of faith. I urge all of our legislators to look seriously at this issue which will bring a new life and a new meaning and purpose to Virginia.” – *Imam Ammar Amonette is the Imam of The Islamic Center of Virginia*

“I stand today unapologetically and unashamedly advocating for the poor, the marginalized and all of God’s children asking the legislature to vote for full Medicaid expansion in the state of Virginia. God calls on us to do justice, to love mercy and walk humbly with our God. Expanding access to healthcare is a moral imperative. It will improve the quality of life for everyone.” – *The Rev. Warren LeSane, Executive and Stated Clerk of the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic of the Presbyterian Church*



“Deuteronomy 22:3 says that if you find anything that someone has lost and you have found, you are obligated to return it. Jewish tradition has interpreted that verse to apply to health as well. We are obligated as a society, because you and I have coverage, to help return that lost item to those who are entitled to it rightfully and humanly. And this is the hour and this is the moment.” – *Rabbi Gary Creditor, Rabbi Emeritus at Temple Beth El in Richmond*

“A recent Hospital Association poll showed that 83 percent of Virginia voters support Medicaid expansion. I suspect if you polled people of faith – especially those active in their churches, synagogues and mosques – the support would be even higher. Why? We love our neighbors. ... We believe Medicaid expansion is an opportunity and we have a great chance to make it happen this year.” – *Ms. Kim Bobo, Executive Director of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy*

