

# *Myths about Health Care Reform* for United Methodists

<b>Myth</b>	<b>Fact</b>	<b>Source</b>
<b>“Congress is debating something called Obamacare.”</b>	No such thing as “Obamacare” exists; President Obama has left details up to Congress. Since the Constitution was enacted in 1789, each chamber of Congress develops its own legislation before the president can sign it into law. The House of Representatives has condensed three bills into one (H.R. 3962), which passed Nov. 7. The Senate has combined two bills into one and is beginning debate. Senate and House bills must then be reconciled before the president can sign legislation into law.	<a href="#"><u>U.S. Constitution</u></a> Article I Sections 5, 7
<b>“GBCS statements are the personal opinions of Jim Winkler.”</b>	As General Secretary of the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS), Jim Winkler is responsible for implementing positions established by the United Methodist General Conference, the denomination’s highest policy-making body. “The prime responsibility of [GBCS] is to seek the implementation of the Social Principles and other policy statements of the General Conference on Christian social concerns ... All [GBCS resources and programs] shall be consistent with the Social Principles and policies adopted by the General Conference.”	<a href="#"><u>2008 Book of Discipline</u></a> Part V Chapter 5 Section IV ¶1004
<b>“GBCS is selling out on the United Methodist position by supporting a bill that does not enact a single-payer system.”</b>	The General Conference mandate to the General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) is to advocate first for a single-payer system. In the event that a single-payer proposal is not under serious discussion or lacks political viability in Congress, GBCS is to advocate for any incremental measure that will move in that direction. Because H.R. 3962 is estimated to increase those covered from 83% of the U.S. population to 96%, supporting the legislation is within the General Conference mandate.	<a href="#"><u>2008 Book of Resolutions</u></a> #3201 (pg. 354) <a href="#"><u>Congressional Budget Office</u></a> 11/05/09
<b>“The federal government has no constitutional right to do this. I heard someone say it violates the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment.”</b>	H.R. 3962 does not violate the 10 <sup>th</sup> Amendment. The Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution gives Congress authority to regulate activities that affect interstate commerce. Health-care delivery in all states involves interstate commerce. States can refuse federal support and/or assist in administering programs. Congress also can authorize the federal government to administer programs on its own.	<a href="#"><u>U.S. Constitution</u></a> Article I Section 8 Clause 3

**“The proposed ‘public option’ in H.R. 3962 is a power grab by the government that will lead to a socialist government takeover of health care.”**

Socialism means government ownership of hospitals and employment of doctors. The only “socialized medicine” in the United States is the system of hospitals that provide care to active duty military, veterans and retirees. The government already provides government-funded health coverage, such as Medicare and Medicaid. Decisions made for Medicare and Medicaid patients are between doctor and patient.

Independent insurance companies, doctors and hospitals will still exist. HR 3962 will correct some abuses of health insurance companies through better regulation.

The public health insurance option will only be available to those eligible for the “Exchange.” The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that only 6 million people will actually buy into the “public option.” Many more people than that will become *new* customers of private insurance companies, according to CBO.

Therefore, no “government takeover” is underway.

[American Heritage Dictionary](#)<sup>®</sup>

[H.R. 3962](#)  
Title II  
(Subtitles A-E),  
Sections 302,  
321(b)(1)

[Congressional Budget Office](#)  
11/05/09

**“Government-funded health care has never been accepted or successful in the United States.”**

The U.S. government operates or funds Medicare, Medicaid, Indian Health Services, Veterans Health Care and the State Children’s Health Improvement Program. A majority of U.S. citizens say these provide coverage as adequate as private plans, and they have proven successful in accomplishing their purpose.

[Gallup poll](#)  
9/01/09

**“H.R. 3962 will cost the U.S. a lot of money, will increase the national debt and bankrupt our children.”**

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that H.R. 3962 will actually *reduce* the deficit by \$109 billion over 10 years. The legislation will continue to reduce the deficit over the second 10 years, as well. The bill will also slow the Medicare growth rate from 6.6% annually to 5.3%.

[Congressional Budget Office](#)  
11/06/09

**“The bill does not address the issue of medical malpractice reform.”**

H.R. 3962 establishes a voluntary incentives grant program to encourage states to implement alternatives to traditional medical malpractice lawsuits. Making laws about tort reform is not within Congress’ power, however, and has to be done by state legislatures.

[H.R. 3962](#)  
Section 2531

**“H.R. 3962 will raise everyone’s taxes, including small businesses, to pay for other people’s health care.”**

H.R. 3962 exempts 86% of businesses from the requirement to provide coverage. Small businesses will receive a tax credit that helps cover 50% of their health-care expenses.

[H.R. 3962](#)  
Sections 413, 551

The bill does not create any new health-care surcharges for individuals making less than \$500,000 annually.

**“Reform means less health care for those who already have it. Where will more doctors come from to care for the millions of newly insured people?”**

Many who don’t have insurance are already getting health care, but it is being donated by doctors or paid for with money taken from rent for homes and food for children. Too many uninsured persons receive care through much more expensive hospital emergency facilities. An adjustment will certainly occur, but when people can receive more primary care, they will use less emergency and secondary care. That will save everyone money. The value of the common good is important to apply here.

[The Urban Institute](#)  
[Faithful Reform in Health Care](#)

<p><b>“Seniors will suffer because the government will take money out of Medicare to pay for health reform.”</b></p>	<p>H.R. 3962 cuts money from Medicare to eliminate waste and fraud currently in the system, fix Medicare overpayments, eliminate cost sharing for preventative services, and reduce unnecessary hospital visits. All of these take funds from your care. The bill will close the Part D coverage gap or “doughnut hole” and, thus, will make prescription drugs more affordable. It makes no changes to the type or quality of care you receive under Medicare.</p>	<p><a href="#">H.R. 3962</a> Sections 1151, 1171, 1181 <a href="#">Medicare Rights Center</a></p>
<p><b>“H.R. 3962 will put government bureaucrats between me and my doctor.”</b></p>	<p>The new regulations in H.R. 3962 will reduce interference by health insurance company bureaucrats or the government in your relationship with your doctor. The only newly created government entity in H.R. 3962 is the public health insurance option, which will negotiate reimbursement rates with providers, not tell them what medicine or procedures to use.</p>	<p><a href="#">H.R. 3962</a> Sections 321, 323, 324</p>
<p><b>“H.R. 3962 does not address the issue of allowing people to buy insurance across state lines.”</b></p>	<p>H.R. 3962 allows creation of health insurance compacts that enable states to enter into agreements to permit sale of insurance across state lines if they choose to do so.</p>	<p><a href="#">H.R. 3962</a> Section 309</p>
<p><b>“The United Methodist Church is supporting legislation that gives federal funds for abortions.”</b></p>	<p>The United Methodist Church recognizes “tragic conflicts of life with life” in which it may be necessary for a woman to choose abortion, and therefore supports the legal option to do so. The health-care legislation passed by the House, H.R. 3962, prohibits the use of <i>any</i> federal funds to pay for abortions.</p>	<p><a href="#">Social Principles ¶161(j)</a> <a href="#">H.R. 3962</a> Sections 258, 259, 265</p>
<p><b>“H.R. 3962 gives federal money to help illegal immigrants purchase health care.”</b></p>	<p>The United Methodist Church supports the provision of health care for all. “We affirm the worth, dignity and inherent value and rights of all persons regardless of their nationality or legal status ... Undocumented immigrants are ... shut out of access to the social services which they support through their difficult labor. Any reform ... must also allow for the full protections of all workers.” Welcoming the sojourner in our midst upholds values that call upon us to love our neighbor.</p> <p>It is regrettable that H.R. 3962 prohibits use of federal funds to pay for health care for undocumented immigrants, because many U.S. citizens, when traveling outside our country, benefit from universal coverage laws in other nations regardless of our citizenship.</p>	<p><a href="#">2008 Book of Resolutions #3281 pg.417-8</a> <a href="#">H.R. 3962</a> Sections 101(i), 342, 347</p>
<p><b>“The government is telling me how I should spend my charity dollars.”</b></p>	<p>The United Methodist Church believes “health care is a basic human right.” Providing health care should not have to be a charity activity.</p> <p>Regrettably, H.R.3962 will not cover 4% of the population, so charitable donations will still be needed.</p>	<p><a href="#">Social Principles ¶162(v)</a> <a href="#">Congressional Budget Office</a> 11/05/09</p>
<p><b>“This is something the Church should do, not the government.”</b></p>	<p>The most important things the Church can do are the attention that comes from caring for and visiting those who are sick, and being individual advocates for them; this is something money cannot buy. The government is best at doing things money can buy, and collecting that money equitably from all citizens. “We believe it is a governmental responsibility to provide all citizens with health care.”</p>	<p><a href="#">Social Principles ¶162(v)</a></p>