

Script for Health Care Forums

(5 min.) **Welcome:** General welcome context of meeting (in the context of Faithful Citizenship)

****Thank you for coming out tonight to discuss this vital concern for all of us. In their document on Faithful Citizenship the bishops draw attention to health care as a life issue. Their earlier statements highlight basic health care as a right of individuals since it is so essential to human dignity.***

****Introduce self. Mention sponsored by DSAO.***

(15 min.) **Introduction/Purpose:** opening of dialogue and coming to common vision and values for health care – will not talk about solutions (use part 1 of DVD from Vision & Voices – open up the dialogue)

****We hope to open a dialogue tonight on the unique role the faith community can play in framing the health care discussion and search for solutions. We are not here to solve the problem, but, hopefully, come to a common vision and values that will form the foundation of any solution. This is a matter of faith – all people of faith need to enter into the dialogue. To put it into this context, let us watch some faith leaders discuss its importance.***

Video – Part 1 (Obtain free from www.visionandvoice.org)

(1st part of prayer – 5 min.) **Prayer that address “open minds”** - see Karen’s handout as a possibility – save the closing prayer for the end and use the first part as a way to flow into the next part.

****We are gathered in the context of our faith. We are called and chosen to take action on behalf of the most vulnerable. Let us now together pray for openness to the workings of the Holy Spirit:***

Loving God, we come before you still learning ... (all should have separate prayer sheet).

Reading: (Should be on separate sheet of paper so that you arrange for someone to read at this time.)

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, 11-12

A reading from the letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.

We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among

God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Continue with the litany and response.

Have someone read the highlighted section of the USCCB letter.

****Let us now continue in a prayerful spirit. – Move into the stories and example section below.***

(Discussion part of prayer and continuation of this section: 20 min.)

Reading the signs of the Times: The System Is Broken (stories – stats – examples – possibly “brainstorm” examples of the problem – may want some “plants” in the audience – maybe a power point – a skilled facilitator who also is knowledgeable about the issue would be most helpful)

Stories and examples (10 min.):

Turn to the person next to you and share a story from your experience or your family experience of the health care system. Classify it as good, bad or neutral.

After 5 min. of telling stories to the person next to each attendee, bring to large group discussion:

****I'm sure we could spend a lot more time telling stories about the system, but let us stop here and draw up a list of words that come to mind. These should come from your experience and the stories you have been sharing. We will record these on newsprint and put them up for the rest of our time together.***

When someone mentions the health care system, what words about the system come to mind? – Just a sampling as a result of the stories
what are you seeing and hearing?

****Let us now look at a sampling of statistics. The health care crisis is affecting all of us, insured, underinsured, and uninsured alike. Deductibles are going up, less is covered, health savings plans are shifting the burden to the individual, many cannot afford the rising co-pays, some have conditions that are uncoverable, and so on. Let us take a fast look at some of these issues.***

Helpful Statistics to think about (10 min. - don't overwhelm, keep it simple)
Powerpoint slides that can be viewed and highlighted without going into detail
Most basic statistics – handouts can have other information for participants to consider later, handouts could also have web sites to use for updated information

****We are now going to move into a discussion that considers the unique contribution that people of faith can make to the discussion of health care for all Americans. We are not going to solve the problem. We are not going to discuss policies and plans. We are going to lay a foundation: one that concerns vision and values. In order to further understand why this discussion is essential, we are going to listen carefully to the DVD about public conscience work.***

(45 min.) **Common Vision & Values** (not policy [solution] language – example: “single payer” is policy language whereas “accessibility” is values/vision language – this is important because values have the power to unify whereas policy language divides – our unique contribution is in the arena of values. This is where we (Catholic and other faith traditions) have credibility.

Part 2 of DVD – helps us leave behind our own frame of reference (15 min.)

****Now let's get to work. In front of you, you have large sheets of paper with three headings. You will spend the first part of your time just brainstorming words about the health care system, the vision, and the values connected to it. You will put these words under their proper heading. For example, single-payer is policy language, inclusive and affordable are vision words, and human right and human dignity are value words. We will stay away from the policy words when we continue our discussion. You will have 10 minutes for this part. (questions 1 and 2 on your guide sheets)***

Elicit values/qualities that under gird the vision – needs to come from the group so the group can claim ownership (20 min.: If group is large, this is a table exercise.)

Have sheets headed by vision, values, solution (policy)

1. What words come to mind when you think of what health care should be?
2. Where does the word fit under our headings?

****Now, we will continue for another 10 minutes on the next part. Again, you will not pull words from the policy column. You will use only the vision and values column. You will be filling out the chart in front of you. Notice, you will choose 4-5 vision points for health care – such as affordable or accessible or quality. Then, you will, for each of those vision words, choose all the value words that support that vision from a faith perspective. (questions 3 and 4 on your guide sheets)***

3. We are not going to use the solution/policy words. Under the vision words, which 2-3 do you think are most important to our vision of health care? Try to get the list down to the top 4-5 most important.

4. What values support those points of the vision? Example: vision: inclusive; values: common good, human dignity, human right, and respect for all life

****Let us now see how we compare across groups. I would ask that each group assign someone to report. As you listen, watch for the common terms. Do we have a single vision here?***

Large Group: Tape up sheets around the room and see commonality (10 min.)

****We can see that there is a lot of commonality in what we have produced. As we move into action steps, a group can take this and refine it into a statement. But let us brainstorm all that we can do. Health Care is an important issue and the faith community is called to make an important contribution. We have seen that the current system is broken. All of us are affected. We can look at band aid approaches and temporary fixes, but we have a moral obligation to press forward with a vision and a strong set of values. What we need is public conscience work and we can change. You are being called as individuals, groups, communities, and as a nation to make a difference. Let us brainstorm ways we can make a difference.***

We also have lots of handouts and helps. There are lists of resources. We have also scripted this forum so that you can conduct the very same forum in your parish or with some other small group.

(20min.)**Action Steps:** Introduce what is available; make suggestions; use commitment form that has three levels: individual, family, parish/community (handouts are important here)

Some Possibilities:

- Some members of group take results and form a draft statement
- Use the Tool Kit provided today to conduct your own forum in your parish
- Discussion in Parishes – “Vision and Voices” materials – 4 wk. course
- Present our legislators with our values and vision and ask them (not us) to implement policy that will embody these values: develop sample letters or emails and sheet of contact information for your parish or group
- Create an advocacy group in the parish to monitor healthcare legislation
- Have a letter writing campaign after all the masses on a weekend
- Create a letter writing/contact group to address elected policy-makers concerning the healthcare system
- Attend candidate forums and ask questions; know where candidates stand on health care reform
- Know your state and federal representatives and senators – talk to them often
- Conduct prayer service for healthcare reform
- Write an op-ed piece or letters to the editor
- Engage in interfaith discussion on topic of healthcare
- Develop an email action alert response plan

- Make use of the provided web sites to monitor what is happening and to participate in action
- Buy the Health Care Tool Kit from the DSAO and make use of its prayer services, scripture reflections, educational sheets, etc. in your parish
- Insert the pastoral circle on health care and the results of this forum in your parish bulletin
- Develop a resource manual of books, DVDs, videos, etc

**** Let us return to our prayer sheet for the closing prayer. Let us start with some prayers of the faithful. For what and for whom would you like to pray?***

Some time for petitions...

Let us pray together...

(2 min.) Closing Prayer (return to prayer that started program)