As one of the nation’s largest faith-based health care systems, Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) has a longstanding commitment to advocacy. CHI leverages its size, diversity, geographic coverage and resources to advocate for improved health and social policies, particularly on behalf of persons who are most vulnerable. Each day, CHI expresses its mission by creating and nurturing healthier communities in the hundreds of sites across the nation where it provides care. CHI operates in 18 states and comprises 104 hospitals, including four academic health centers and major teaching hospitals and 30 critical-access facilities; community health-services organizations; accredited nursing colleges; home health agencies; and other facilities that span the inpatient and outpatient continuum of care.

Our approach to advocacy is multi-faceted and goes beyond traditional government relations. It recognizes the varied roles CHI assumes – provider, employer, investor, purchaser, community member and citizen. We focus our advocacy efforts on three interrelated bodies of work:

**Individual/Community**
Focus on immediate needs/assets, the provision of direct services and community partnerships (e.g., violence prevention)

**Societal/Governmental**
Focus on achieving systemic change through legislation, regulation and political activism (e.g., accessible and affordable health care for all)

**Organizational/System**
Focus on internal justice issues, provider integrity, and social responsibility (e.g., socially responsible investing, environmental sustainability)
CHI’s Advocacy Priorities 2017-2018

CHI’s Advocacy Priorities remain consistent though they have been refined in response to changes in the political, social and health care environment. Access and Coverage for All remains our highest priority. The updated priorities also identify four specific actions that require immediate advocacy attention.

In addition to advocacy on the identified priorities, CHI continually monitors and acts on emerging issues impacting the health and well-being of the communities we serve. Our commitment to advocacy is carried out at the local, state and national levels as we advance our mission of creating healthier communities and serving as a voice for persons who are most vulnerable.

**Access and Coverage for All**

Assure that all persons have access to and coverage for needed health care services.

**Pursue:** continued coverage for individuals who gained insurance through the Affordable Care Act; protection of the Medicaid and Medicare programs from reforms that reduce coverage, benefits or funding; reauthorization of the Children’s Health Insurance Program; increased access to mental health services; affordable drugs; protection of rural health care; and an expanded health care workforce.

**Quality, Value & Fair Payment**

Advance high-quality, clinically integrated care that provides high value for patients and fair payment for providers and programs.

**Pursue:** policies that advance integrated care delivery throughout the continuum of care; new models of health care delivery and payment including effective quality measures; protection of Medicare and Medicaid from inequitable federal spending cuts; and financial assistance for safety-net hospitals.

**Stronger, Healthier Communities**

Address factors impacting the health and well-being of individuals and communities.

**Pursue:** programs to address determinants of health, including socioeconomic factors, safe and affordable housing, and the prevalence of violence; health equity to eliminate disparities in health care access, quality and outcomes; environmental health; and prevention and wellness efforts.

**Vibrant Ministry**

Preserve and promote the values and charitable purpose of Catholic health care.

**Pursue:** expansion of high-quality palliative and end-of-life care while opposing physician-assisted suicide; protection of persons who are poor or vulnerable; immigrant justice; preservation of non-profit health care and tax-exempt status; and upholding of conscience protections.

**Immediate Actions**

- Protect access and coverage for more than 20 million Americans who gained insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act from efforts to amend, repeal or replace the law.
- Protect the Medicaid program from efforts to reduce overall coverage and benefits as well as efforts to lessen federal support through state block grants or per capita caps.
- Address the mental health crisis in America through improved access and coverage, adequate funding, and availability of mental health professionals.
- Address the social determinants of health that impact the well-being of our communities, including violence.

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