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# Reproductive Justice Values for Federal Universal Health Care Reform

In the summer of 1994, twelve Black women created the Reproductive Justice (RJ) framework, which dreams of a world where everyone has a right to control their own bodies and futures, live with dignity, and have children, not have children, and raise children in safe, healthy, and sustainable communities. Their first action was to call attention to the Clinton administration's health care reform proposal, which neglected their community's concerns, through a letter to Congress called "[Black Women on Health Care Reform](#)."

The Medicaid and Reproductive Justice Collaborative is comprised of [Advocates for Youth](#) (AFY), [In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#) (IOOV), [National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum](#) (NAPAWF), [National Health Law Program](#) (NHLP), [National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice](#) (Latina Institute), and [Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity](#) (URGE). In recognition of the thirtieth anniversary of the RJ movement, our *Reproductive Justice Values for Federal Universal Health Care Reform* (Values) aim to build on the RJ founders' vision for health care reform.

## OUR VALUES

### 1. Health care is a human right.

We recognize value in every human being. Everyone in the United States should have access to health care no matter their income, employment status, immigration status, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, citizenship, disability, or other factors. Universal health coverage must include access to sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health care, including abortion coverage, that is respectful of individual cultural beliefs, practices, communication needs, and language preferences. Health care must also be accessible to all in the language of their choice.

### 2. Underrecognized communities must be represented fairly among those making health care policies.

Communities who have been historically underrecognized by society have the most to gain through universal health care reform efforts. Fair representation of underrecognized communities among health care policymakers is critical to ensuring that their concerns are given priority and reform meets their needs.

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### **3. Underrecognized communities' concerns and vision must guide reform throughout design, implementation, and evaluation.**

Universal health coverage reform efforts can only be successful if the concerns and visions of underrecognized communities are placed at the forefront of all efforts. Policymakers must listen to underrecognized communities at every step of the reform process to help create an inclusive, effective, and equitable health care system.

### **4. All people must be free from health care discrimination.**

Certain communities have always faced unfair treatment within our health care system. This has led to gaps in health care quality for those communities, inadequate treatment of pain and other conditions, diagnosis delays, and forced sterilization, among other issues that all contribute to health inequities. All people deserve to receive health care free from bias, coercion, and other discrimination. No one should have trouble communicating with their health care or insurance provider due to language barriers. Universal health care reform must incorporate and expand upon current protections from discrimination, such as those in the Affordable Care Act.

### **5. Health insurance must cover all the services people need.**

Everyone must have access to all the health care services they need. Universal health coverage must include: sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming care services, such as abortion and HIV services; Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) services; mental health and substance use disorder services; prescription drugs; home and community-based services; and vision, hearing, and dental services.

### **6. Health care must be affordable for everyone.**

Too often, copayments, deductibles, premiums, and other health care costs keep people from accessing the health care they need. Universal health care reform must ensure that health care is affordable for everyone.

### **7. Everyone should have a right to keep their health information private.**

All people, including young people, im/migrants, and LGBTQI+ people must be able to access health care without fear that their health information will be revealed to parents, guardians, or law enforcement.

### **8. All people have uninterrupted access to care and the power to enforce their rights.**

People should be able to enforce their right to health care when it has been violated, including when a health care provider refuses to offer a service based on their religious or other personal belief.

#### **About This Resource**

These *Values* were authored by Rolonda Donelson, Maeve McKean Women's Law & Public Policy Fellow, NHeLP. Salen Andrews, Latina Institute; Tuyet Duong, NAPAWF; Chelsea Gonzalez, AFY; Hope Jackson, URGE; Camille Kidd, IOOV; and Madeline Morcelle, NHeLP co-created the vision for this resource and were critical partners in its development.