

LEGISLATIVE HOT LINE



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Sponsored by the Five Catholic Commissions and Catholic Campaign for Human Development of the Secretariat for Catholic Charities Health and Human Services

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“Health Care is not just another issue for the Church or for a healthy society. It is a fundamental issue of human life and dignity. Health care is a critical component of the Catholic Church’s ministry. “
*Bishop Murphy, Chair Committee Domestic Justice & Human Development USCCB ***

STRONG, CLEAR, UNITED CATHOLIC VOICE NEEDED IN HEALTH CARE DEBATE **ACT TODAY!**

BACKGROUND: For many years, and especially over the last several months, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has advocated for decent, affordable, accessible health care for all. Now the current and much needed national health care dialogue is being buried in an avalanche of ideological combat, misinformation, partisan positioning and public anger and confusion.

In the middle of this debate the Catholic community has a unique perspective. The Catholic community provides health care to millions in our hospitals, clinics and nursing homes, purchases health care coverage for our employees in our parishes and health care institutions, and we pick up the pieces of a failing health care system in our emergency rooms, shelters, schools and parishes. The families and people without health care coverage are not abstractions for us; we see them every day and see how their lives and dignity are threatened.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: Our teaching insists health care is a right and shouldn’t depend on where your parents work, where you live or when you got here. Instead, every person, created in the image and likeness of God, has a right to life and to those things necessary to sustain life, including affordable, quality health care. This teaching is rooted in the biblical call to heal the sick and to serve “the least of these,” our concern for human life and dignity, and the principle of the common good. Our tradition insists the moral measure of health care reform is how it touches the weak and vulnerable, babies in their mother’s womb and the very sick and old at the end of life, those without access and power.

PRIORITIES OF THE USCCB (*US Conference of Catholic Bishops*) **REGARDING HEALTH CARE**

1. **Supports universal health coverage which protects the life and dignity of all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable.** Because Catholic teaching insists that basic health care is a right and is essential to protect human life and dignity, genuine health care reform which protects human life and advances universal coverage is a moral imperative and urgent national priority. For us, universal coverage should be truly universal, assuring decent health care for all from conception to natural death. “
2. **Opposes any efforts to expand abortion funding, mandate abortion coverage, or endanger the conscience rights of health care providers and religious institutions.** Longstanding and widely supported current policies on these issues must be preserved. We urge members of the House and Senate to take all steps necessary to oppose abortion funding, mandated abortion coverage or weakening of conscience rights.”
3. **Supports effective measures to safeguard the health of immigrants, their children and all of society** by expanding eligibility for public programs, such as Medicaid, to all low-income families and vulnerable people and by offering adequate subsidies for cost-sharing of insurance premiums and out of pocket expenses”.

****Click here to read the complete [letter of Bishop William Murphy, Chair, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development USCCB to Members of Congress](#) outlining the priorities of the USCCB**

A strong, clear and united Catholic voice is needed in the health care debate more than ever. We need to bring our principles and priorities to help get this debate back to basics. It is not right that more than 45 million of our neighbors have no health care coverage. It is wrong, morally wrong. We can and must do better in using the remarkable health care capacity and resources of our nation to serve all our residents. **And we should begin with the principle that the purpose of health care reform is to protect and enhance the life and dignity of all.**

ACTION

CALL YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES AND TELL THEM HEALTH CARE REFORM SHOULD:

1. Supports universal health coverage which protects the life and dignity of all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable
2. Opposes any efforts to expand abortion funding, mandate abortion coverage, or endanger the conscience rights of health care providers and religious institutions.
3. Supports effective measures to safeguard the health of immigrants, their children and all of society by expanding eligibility for public programs, such as Medicaid, to all low-income families and vulnerable people and by offering adequate subsidies for cost-sharing of insurance premiums and out of pocket expenses.

~~Call Capitol Switchboard (202) 224-3121 Go to www.house.gov or www.senate.gov for Members full contact information, including local District offices.

NOTE: On August 18, 2009 Bishop Richard Lennon, Bishop of Cleveland, released a very strong statement regarding Health care reform. [Click here to read his entire statement](#)

SEE PREVIOUS LEGISLATIVE HOT LINE (JULY 28, 2009) FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING ADVOCACY ON HEALTH CARE REFORM!

<http://www.clevelandcatholiccharities.org/dsao/>

EVENTS AND RESOURCES

The USCCB has launched a **new Web site** promoting our support of “truly universal health policy with respect for human life and dignity.” The site, www.usccb.org/healthcare, includes letters from bishops to Congress, videos, backgrounders, facts and statistics, frequently asked questions, and links for contacting members of Congress. Please use and promote this new resource.

Catholic Social Teaching: “Reform of the nation’s health care system needs to be rooted in values that respect human dignity, protect human life, and meet the needs of the poor and uninsured, especially born and unborn children, pregnant women, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations.”

For more information on the above, please call the Diocesan Social Action Office at 216-939-3851 or 888-620-5280. You can also visit our web page at www.catholic-action.org for more information. Thank you.