

## **The Facts About Health Care Reform and the Position of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

As you know, there is a lot of misinformation being disseminated nationally and locally about health care reform. Quite frankly, some organizations are distorting the truth to advance what appears to be their own agenda. Misleading information has appeared on television (through paid ads), on the radio talk shows, in newspaper columns, and spread throughout the internet by a variety of means. As a result, many parishioners are confused about what to believe regarding the current debate. We highly recommend that they be referred to the USCCB's web page as an authentic source of teaching regarding the position of our Church on health care reform.

Our U.S. Bishops have been consistent and very clear about their position on health care reform. They have affirmed Catholic Social Teaching on Health Care. (See "A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform at [www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/comphealth.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/comphealth.shtml) ). On July 17, 2009, they issued an action alert, entitled "Reform Health Care and Protect Human Life and Dignity." In this alert, the USCCB called upon Catholics to contact their legislators to tell them that health care reform should:

- Include health care coverage for all people from conception until natural death
- Continue the federal ban on funding for abortions and reject any mandate for abortion coverage or access to abortion
- Include access for all with a special concern for the poor and vulnerable and support inclusion for legal immigrants
- Preserve pluralism, including freedom of conscience for providers, health care workers and patients
- Restrain costs and apply costs equitably among payers

This action alert was followed by a July 27<sup>th</sup> alert that updates the progress of health care and underscores the Church's position.

Also on July 17, 2009, Bishop William Murphy, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Domestic Policy, sent a letter to Congress. Bishop Murphy described health care as "a basic right belonging to all human beings, from conception to natural death" and said that "the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is working to ensure that needed health reform is not undermined by abandoning longstanding and widely supported policies against abortion funding and mandates and in favor of conscience protection."

Parishioners can find Bishop Murphy's letter, as well as, a comprehensive listing of all the teaching and documents on health care reform, at [www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/health1.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/health1.shtml).

The Diocesan Social Action Office (DSAO) would also like to recommend to you the July 30, 2009 statement of Cardinal Justin Rigali, Chairman of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on Pro Life Activities. The Cardinal wrote to all members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee urging them to amend H.R. 3200 to retain longstanding government policies on abortion and conscience rights.

The DSAO has recently issued two legislative hotlines dated July 20 & 28 that mirror the position of the Bishops' Conference. They can be found at our web site at [www.catholic-action.org](http://www.catholic-action.org). (scroll down to the legislative hotline listings). We unequivocally support the moral framework advocated by the USCCB. We hope this short overview is of help to you. Please spread the word about these resources.