

August 2009

A PROGRAM OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE DIOCESE OF ERIE, INC.

Health Care Reform



Given the amount of national discussion on health care reform and its complexity, it is important to understand the Church's position on this critical issue. For decades the United States Catholic Bishops have been and will continue to be consistent advocates for health care for all, including the weak and the vulnerable. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) offers four basic ethical principles that should guide our discussions in health care reform.

- Health Care should be a truly universal health policy with respect for human life and dignity.
- There should be health care access for all with a special concern for the poor and inclusion of legal immigrants.
- Health care reform should pursue the common good and preserve pluralism including freedom of conscience and variety of options.
- Any type of reform should restrain costs and apply them equitably across the spectrum of payers.

Areas of Special Attention



Respect for life & dignity

The Bishop's have remained committed to health care reform but clarify that the Church strongly opposes the inclusion of abortion as part of a national health care benefit. No health care reform plan should compel any individual to pay for the destruction of human life, whether through government funding or mandating coverage of abortion.

- For years, the United States Congress has respected the right of health care providers to decline involvement in abortion or abortion referrals. They have respected moral and religious objections.
- The Weldon Amendment, which is an amendment to the Labor/HHS appropriations act, approved every year since 2004, forbids any federal agency or program to discriminate against individual or institutional health care providers or insurers because they decline to provide, pay for, provide coverage of, or refer for abortion.
- The Hyde Amendment is a provision that does not allow for use of federal funds to pay for abortions.
 - This has been in existence since 1976 and is critical in protecting the unborn.
- Catholics must advocate on behalf of the unborn, and tell Congress to keep the Weldon Amendment and the Hyde Amendment in place to uphold freedom of conscience and not allow tax payer dollars to fund abortion.



Health Care Access for All

- All people need and should have access to comprehensive, quality health care that is affordable, should not depend on their stage of life, where or whether they or their parents work, how much they earn, where they live or where they were born.
- After health care reform is implemented, some individuals and families, including immigrants will still lack insurance coverage.
 - Therefore, it is essential to secure sufficient funding for safety-net clinics, hospitals and other providers serving those who will continue to fall through the cracks.

Where do we go from here?



When Congress returns for the fall session, it is important for people of all faiths to advocate for health care reform that respects and protects the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death. It is a fundamental issue of human life and dignity. Health care is a critical ministry for the Catholic Church. One out of six patients is cared for in Catholic hospitals.

Here are some advocacy points that can be used in working with legislators:

- Any health care reform plan should include coverage for all people from conception to natural death.
- Advocate for the continuation of the federal ban on funding for abortions and reject any mandate for abortion coverage or access to abortion.
- Any health care reform plan should include access for all with a special concern for the poor and vulnerable and also supports inclusion for legal immigrants.
- Preserve pluralism, including freedom of conscience for providers, health care workers and patients.
- Restrain costs and apply costs equitable among payers.
- Pray for health care reform that respects and protects the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Upcoming Events



September 12, 2009

Western Vicariate Care and Concern Conference

Location: St. Mary of Grace Catholic Church

1085 Water Street, Meadville PA

Time: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Topic: Hospice & End of Life Care

RSVP by September 9, 2009 to

Erin Landini-Grogan at

(800) 374-3723 or elandini@eriercd.org

Or contact Rose Bronson

(814) 337-7673

October 3, 2009

On October 3, 2009, Bishop Donald Trautman will celebrate mass to commence Respect Life month.

It will be celebrated at 5:15 p.m. on October 3, 2009 at Saint Peter Cathedral, Erie.

For more information please contact Erin Landini-Grogan at (800) 374-3723 ext 254 or by e-mail elandini@erieRCD.org