



TAKE ACTION!!

March 24, 2009

Urge Continued Conscience Protection in Health Care

- Contact HHS to maintain the current regulation protecting conscience rights in health care
- Lay the groundwork for other Congressional actions by contacting Congress and the Administration to ensure that conscience protection is not weakened or undermined.

WHY IS THIS ACTION IMPORTANT NOW?

- (1) The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is inviting public comment on a proposal to rescind a December 2008 federal regulation that implements and enforces three federal laws protecting the conscience rights of health care providers.
- (2) Congress is likely to face a number of efforts to end or weaken protection in the area of conscience and prohibitions on federal funding of abortion. Now is the time to lay the groundwork to shape this process to ensure that conscience protection is maintained.

WHAT DOES THIS ISSUE HAVE TO DO WITH MY FAITH?

Catholic Teaching insists health care is a fundamental human right, an essential protection for human life and dignity. The Church has long supported access to health care for all, with a special concern for the poor. This support is rooted in our "commitment to the life and dignity of every human being from conception to natural death" (U.S. bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, #16). No Catholic or other person should be forced by law to participate in actions that violate this fundamental conviction. Current conscience protection must be maintained. It is wrong to compel people to participate in abortions or other morally unacceptable actions, and any provisions seeking to do so will doom needed health reform. To undermine effective federal conscience protection, to abandon the longstanding prohibition on federal funding for abortion, or insist that abortion should be an integral part of much-needed national health care reform, would violate our consciences.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- *Contact HHS and urge them to retain current conscience protections for health care providers. For information on sending a message, go to usccb.org/conscienceprotection.*
- *Contact your senators and representatives and contact the White House to urge that any health legislation include strong conscience protection for individuals and institutions. Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121, or find your representatives' or senators' contact information at www.congress.org. Call the White House comment line at 202-456-1111 or send an e-mail to whitehouse.gov/CONTACT.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT *Richard Doerflinger, Associate Director, USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, rdoerflinger@usccb.org, (202) 541-3171, or Kathy Saile, Director, USCCB Office for Domestic Social Development, (202) 541-3134.*