

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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Tell Congress: Remove Abortion Funding & Mandates from Needed Health Care Reform

Congress is preparing to debate health care reform legislation on the House and Senate floors.

Genuine health care reform should protect the life and dignity of all people from the moment of conception until natural death. The U.S. bishops' conference has concluded that all committee approved bills are seriously deficient on the issues of abortion and conscience, and do not provide adequate access to health care for immigrants and the poor. The bills will have to change or the bishops have pledged to oppose them.

Our nation is at a crossroads. Policies adopted in health care reform will have an impact for good or ill for years to come. None of the bills retains longstanding current policies against abortion funding or abortion coverage mandates, and none fully protects conscience rights in health care.

As the U.S. bishops' letter of October 8 states: "No one should be required to pay for or participate in abortion. It is essential that the legislation clearly apply to this new program longstanding and widely supported federal restrictions on abortion funding and mandates, and protections for rights of conscience. No current bill meets this test.... If acceptable language in these areas cannot be found, we will have to oppose the health care bill vigorously."

For the full text of this letter and more information on proposed legislation and the bishops' advocacy for authentic health care reform, visit: www.usccb.org/healthcare.

Congressional leaders are attempting to put together final bills for floor consideration. Please contact your Representative and Senators today and urge them to fix these bills with the pro-life amendments noted below. Otherwise much needed health care reform will have to be opposed. Health care reform should be about saving lives, not destroying them.

ACTION: Contact Members through e-mail, phone calls or FAX letters.

- **To send a pre-written, instant e-mail to Congress go to www.usccb.org/action.**
- **Call the U.S. Capitol switchboard at: 202-224-3121, or call your Members' local offices.**
- **Full contact info can be found on Members' web sites at www.house.gov & www.senate.gov.**

MESSAGE to SENATE: "During floor debate on the health care reform bill, please support an amendment to incorporate longstanding policies against abortion funding and in favor of conscience rights. If these serious concerns are not addressed, the final bill should be opposed."

MESSAGE to HOUSE: "Please support the Stupak Amendment that addresses essential pro-life concerns on abortion funding and conscience rights in the health care reform bill. Help ensure that the Rule for the bill allows a vote on this amendment. If these serious concerns are not addressed, the final bill should be opposed."

WHEN: Both House and Senate are preparing for floor votes now. **Act today! Thank you!**