

What are the US Bishops Saying About Health Care Reform?

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"Genuine health care reform that protects the life and dignity of all is a moral imperative and a vital national obligation," said Bishop William F. Murphy of Rockville Centre, N.Y., as he outlined health care reform policy priorities of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in his July 17 letter to Congress. Writing on behalf of the US bishops, Bishop Murphy said the bishops have advocated comprehensive health care reform for decades and recommended four criteria for fair and just health care reform: respect for human life and dignity, access for all, pluralism and equitable costs.

The e-mail, presented below, sent on Friday, September 11 by the USCCB, presents the key Catholic points of concern regarding health care reform. The US Bishops are very concerned that any proposed health care plan: covers all people; protects and respects all human life; protects conscience rights; safeguards the health of immigrants; and contains adequate safety nets.

From: JPHD-USCCB [mailto:JPHD-USCCB@usccb.org]

Sent: Friday, September 11, 2009 2:29 PM

Subject: Action: Contact Congress now on health care reform

Thank you for your advocacy this past month in support of health care reform that respects the life and dignity of all people. Now that Congress has returned to Washington and is again working on the health care bills, we need your advocacy more than ever.

Please call your Members of Congress at 202-224-3121 and tell them to:

1. Support long-overdue health care reform that covers all people and protects the life, dignity, and health of all. Health care reform is an important national priority and moral imperative.
2. A fair and just health care reform bill must exclude mandated coverage for abortion, and uphold longstanding laws that restrict abortion funding and protect conscience rights.

Urge Members to take whatever steps necessary in Committee or on the Floor to oppose abortion funding, abortion mandates, and weakening of conscience protections. Imposing abortion coverage or funding is bad morality, bad policy, and bad politics. Efforts to expand abortion will undermine attempts to pass needed reform.

3. Support effective measures to safeguard the health of immigrants, their children and all of society. Maintain an adequate safety net for those who remain uncovered. Eliminate the five-year waiting period banning immigrants lawfully residing in the United States from enrolling in Medicaid. Do not place barriers to obtaining private health care coverage for immigrants.