



Pro-Life Activities

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 6, 2016
From: Greg Schleppenbach, Associate Director
Re: Action Needed on HHS Decision

On June 21 we received the shocking news that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared, contrary to the plain meaning of current federal law, that the state of California can continue forcing all health plans under its jurisdiction to cover elective abortions.

The California Department of Managed Health Care began requiring health plans to cover abortion in 2014. This action prompted religious employers in California that offer group health plans to their employees to lodge an objection with HHS. On June 21, HHS sent the State and the objecting sponsors a letter stating that HHS refuses to take any action because the insurance companies have no moral or religious objection to abortion coverage.

At least one other state, New York, has already followed California's lead and this action by HHS will only prompt more states to follow suit.

In response to this outrageous decision by HHS, Archbishop William Lori and Cardinal Timothy Dolan issued a news release in their respective capacities as chairmen of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty and USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities. You should have already received that [news release](#) and a [fact sheet](#) on the ruling.

In the Bishops' response, they call for an immediate federal remedy by urging Congress to pass the Conscience Protection Act (CPA) (H.R. 4828, S. 2927). This Friday, the Health subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee will hold a forum to feature healthcare providers who are victims or potential victims of conscience violations. And there is hope for a vote in the House in the coming weeks. So now is a critical time for you to generate contacts to your representatives in the House and Senate urging them to enact the Conscience Protection Act.

Last week you should have received an [action alert](#) from NCHLA/Human Life Action referencing HHS's ruling in California and urging calls, emails and personal visits with their members of Congress urging them to enact the CPA.

Urgent action is needed. If you haven't already responded to this action alert, please do

so now. And please include this effort to enact the CPA in your prayers. Thank you for all you do to proclaim the Gospel of Life!

Greg Schleppenbach