



A Pro-Life Religious Outreach Newspaper

Health Care Reform Bills Authorize Government Funding of Abortions

The U.S. House and U.S. Senate are expected to vote in late September on "health care reform" bills that would result in federal government funding of elective abortion on a vast scale.

In the House, the Obama White House is pushing H.R. 3200, which has been approved by three different committees. All three committees rejected amendments advocated by the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) and other pro-life groups to prevent the bills from mandating coverage of abortions and to prevent federal subsidies for abortions. On the third panel, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the pro-abortion side narrowly won adoption of a "phony compromise" amendment offered by pro-abortion Rep. Lois Capps (D-Ca.). The Capps Amendment would explicitly authorize coverage of all elective abortions under the giant new "public plan" that the bill would create, and also would allow federal subsidies to flow to private insurance plans that cover elective abortions.

The independent center FactCheck.org (affiliated with the Annenberg Public Policy Center) on August 21 issued an analysis titled, "Abortion: Which Side is Fabricating?" which found: "Despite what Obama said, the House bill would allow abortions to be covered by a federal plan and by federally subsidized private plans." FactCheck.org also wrote about the bill: "Obama has said in the past that 'reproductive services' would be covered by his public plan,

so it's likely that any new federal insurance plan would cover abortion unless Congress expressly prohibits that. Low-and moderate-income persons who would choose the 'public plan' would qualify for federal subsidies to purchase it. Private plans that cover abortion also could be purchased with the help of federal subsidies."

In the Senate, the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee has approved, on a party-line vote, the "Affordable Health Choices Act," which would have even more expansive pro-abortion effects. "The Senate bill would result in the greatest expansion of abortion since Roe v. Wade," said NRLC Legislative Director Douglas Johnson. "It would result in federally mandated coverage of abortion by nearly all health plans, federally mandated recruitment of abortionists by local health networks, nullification of many state abortion laws, and federal government funding of abortion on a massive scale."

For more details and updates, go to www.nrlactioncenter.com and www.nrlc.org/AHC/Index.html

What You Can Do Now

Please take a few minutes to send messages to your two U.S. senators and to your representative in the U.S. House of Representatives. An easy way to do this is to go to the Legislative Action Center on the NRLC web site at www.nrlactioncenter.com. There you can fill in your mailing address and have your message automatically sent by e-mail to your senators and representative. Even better, make phone calls, too: Call 202-224-3121 to reach your senators' offices, or 202-225-3121 to reach the office of your U.S. Representative. If you call and give the Capitol Hill operator your zip code, you will be connected with the correct office.

Rationing/Euthanasia Remain a Danger in Health Care Reform

The Powell Center for Medical Ethics Director, Burke Balch, J.D., warns that current bills for health care reform propose to reduce Medicare funding for older people in order to cover the uninsured. This entails the danger that in a few years the government, having over-promised and underfunded benefits, will need to either substantially increase taxes or impose rationing of medical care.

National Right to Life Committee negotiated with the Senate Finance Committee to include language forbidding the use of comparative effectiveness data to deny treatment discriminatorily based on disability, age or terminal illness. However, neither the Kennedy bill in the Senate nor the three House bills contain this language, so there is no guarantee that such language will be included in the bill the Congress finally passes.

Provisions promoting advance directives are included in the House legislation (H.R.3200, section 1233). This includes Medicare payments to health care providers who give "advance care planning" to patients when they enter Medicare, every five years thereafter, and if they become seriously ill; requirements that private and public health care plans give enrollees the option to establish advance directives;

and a public education campaign to promote advance care planning.

Cost-saving motivations could result in more advance directives rejecting lifesaving treatment. For this reason, there is a pro-life concern that promotion of advance directives could in practice become a means of persuading or pressuring patients to agree to less treatment as a means of saving money. It is especially important that advance care planning not include the "option" of assisted suicide. The fact that an offshoot of the Hemlock Society known as Compassion & Choices was involved in writing this section of the proposed reform legislation should sound a note of alarm.

Key Points on Health Care Rationing to Make to Legislator

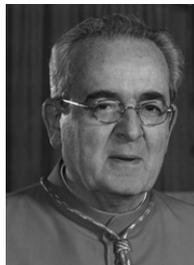
1. Unless there is sustainable, adequate financing, health insurance for the uninsured will almost surely lead to rationing when, down the road, government has to face a shortfall. 2. The government must not be authorized, whether through "comparative effectiveness" research using "quality-adjusted life years" or other measures, to compel or encourage denial of lifesaving medical treatment, food, or fluids based on the patient's age, disability, or "quality of life." 3. Measures to promote advance care directives, or funding for "advance care planning" consultations in Medicare, must not be used to pressure patients into rejecting lifesaving treatment as a means of saving money, nor provide for assisted suicide as an alternative.

Cardinal Rigali Urges Congressmen To Oppose Abortion in Health Reform

In his third letter (August 11) to the House of Representatives, Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia, Chairman of USCCB's Pro-Life Secretariat, urges the Congressmen to amend the parts of H.R. 3200 that promote abortion and its funding by taxpayers. He describes these specific provisions as follows:

"The legislation delegates to the Secretary of Health and Human Services the power to make unlimited abortion a mandated benefit in the "public health insurance plan" the government will manage nationwide. This would be a radical change: Federal law has long excluded most abortions from federal employees' health benefits packages, and no federal health program mandates coverage of elective abortions.

"Because some federal funds are authorized and appropriated by this legislation without passing through the Labor/HHS appropriations bill, they are not covered by the Hyde amendment and other federal provisions that have long prevented federal funding of abortion and of health benefits packages that include abortion. The committee rejected an amendment to extend this longstanding policy to the use of federal subsidies for health care premiums under this Act. Instead the committee created a legal fiction, a paper separation between federal funding and abortion: Federal funds will subsidize the public plan, as well as private health plans that include abortion on demand; but anyone who purchases these plans is required to pay a premium out of his or her own pocket



Cardinal Rigali

to cover all abortions beyond those eligible for federal funds under the current Hyde amendment. Thus some will claim that federal taxpayer funds do not support abortion under the Act.

"But this is an illusion. Funds paid into these plans are fungible, and federal taxpayer funds will subsidize the operating budget and provider networks that expand access to abortions. Furthermore, those constrained by economic necessity or other factors to purchase the "public plan" will be forced by the federal government to pay directly and specifically for abortion coverage. This is the opposite of the policy in every other federal health program. Government will force low-income Americans to subsidize abortions for others (and abortion coverage for themselves) even if they find abortion morally abhorrent....

Most Americans do not want abortion in their health coverage, and most consider themselves "pro-life," with a stronger majority among low-income Americans. About 80 percent of all hospitals do not generally provide abortions, and 85 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion provider. By what right, then, and by what precedent, would Congress make abortion coverage into a nationwide norm, or force Americans to subsidize it as a condition for participating in a public health program?...

"I urge you to help ensure that any legislation that comes up for a vote in the full House does not include these unacceptable features. Please support amendments to correct them, and oppose any rule for consideration of H.R. 3200 that would block such amendments."

Mary Ann Glendon & 83 Bishops Lauded for Pro-Life Stand

By Anthony J. Lauinger, NRLC Vice-President

Mary Ann Glendon, Harvard law professor and former U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, had been invited to receive Notre Dame's highest honor, the Laetare Medal, at the university's May 17 commencement, but subsequently declined the Notre Dame award when it became apparent that her appearance was being cited by the university as justification for Notre Dame's honoring of pro-abortion President Barack Obama on the same stage.

Ambassador Glendon was in good company in denouncing this act of public scandal by Notre Dame: more than 80 Catholic bishops did likewise. Many of the 83 bishops, archbishops, and cardinals who spoke out referenced the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' document, "Catholics in Political Life," which states: "The Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions."

This policy was adopted by a virtually unanimous vote of the U.S. Catholic bishops in 2004. Sadly, some Catholic colleges and universities have reacted, not by resolving to avoid the same error that Notre Dame made but, rather, by seeking to influence the bishops to change or abandon the policy. Since May, the pressure has been building on the bishops either to weaken the rule, or else to abandon the guideline altogether.

Ambassador Glendon, in her letter to Notre Dame President Father John I. Jenkins, C.S.C., declining the Notre Dame award, pointed out that President Obama is "a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the Church's position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice." The bishops'

Mary Ann Glendon will receive National Right to Life's highest honor at the formal Proudly Pro-Life Awards Dinner October 6 at New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. For reservations, phone 202-626-8827 or 202-378-8842.

2004 statement about not honoring such individuals, she wrote, "seems to me so reasonable that I am at a loss to understand why a Catholic university should disrespect it."

It is crucial that pro-life Americans, whether Catholic or not, convey their appreciation and encouragement to America's Catholic bishops for their unwavering commitment to life. The Catholic bishops, under constant assault from the secular culture, have served as a bulwark against the destruction of the human family's most vulnerable little members. Through the darkest hours of the decades-long battle against the slaughter of our nation's unborn children, the Catholic bishops have been steadfast in defending the sanctity of innocent human life.

Now they are being pressured by the same secular influences, pro-abortion faculty interests, misguided college-administrator attitudes, and mindless appeals to "academic freedom" that undermined Notre Dame's commitment to pro-life and Catholic values in the Obama-commencement disaster. The unborn child in America needs the Catholic bishops. It is we who are called to make sure that the bishops feel the appreciation of pro-life citizens, and receive the encouragement to ensure that institutions which call themselves "Catholic" are, in fact, pro-life.

Mary Ann Glendon, who was at the eye of the storm at Notre Dame, was the one who emerged from that tragic scandal with her honor and integrity unscathed, and her stature enhanced. For her edifying example, uncommon courage, and selfless devotion to the protection of innocent human life, the heroine of the Notre Dame tragedy will receive National Right to Life's highest honor at the formal Proudly Pro-Life Awards Dinner (see box above).

Bulletin Inserts

November 1 - Perhaps true sainthood consists of accepting challenges and relying on God to rise above them. A pregnant woman pressured and confused feels abortion is the only solution. Yet in the struggle against this temptation, there is always grace to do what is right. "God will not let you be tested beyond your strength. Along with the test, he will give you a way out of it so that you may be able to endure it." (1Cor. 10: 13)

November 8 – The difference between the pro-abortion side and the pro-life side is not that they favor women's rights and we love the baby. The real difference is that they think you can separate the two and we don't. Thus, the pro-life position is, "Lets love them both. Mother and child belong together." (Priests for Life newsletter, May-June, 2008)

November 15 – Addressing the Italian Chamber of Deputies, Professor Rocco Buttiglione noted the prevalence of forced abortion in China and other parts of Asia: "There are countries covering one quarter of humanity in which abortion of the second child is required. There are countries spanning perhaps another quarter of humanity in which it is possible for women to be bribed with the offer of aid to have abortions. (Newsmax.com, 7/31/09)

November 22 – As we give thanks for the gift of life, consider the words of Pope John Paul II: "Causing death can never be considered a form of medical treatment. Rather, it runs completely counter to the health-care profession, which is meant to be an impassioned and unflinching affirmation of life." *Gospel of Life*

November 29 – If you paid attention to the media, you would think that those who oppose embryonic stem cell research and a host of other laboratory-created life techniques are "anti-science." But this is not a science debate. It's a debate about ethics, morality and what is right and wrong. (Wesley Smith, *NRL News*, June, 2008)

December 6 – Writing in the *Michigan Law Review* about Oregon's assisted suicide law, two physicians stated that reasonable sounding safeguards, which proponents said were there to protect patients, do not appear to have achieved that purpose and are easily circumvented. "As a result, Oregon physicians appear to have been given great power without being in a position to exercise it responsibly." *NRL News*, June, 2008)

December 13 – Speaking of her Down syndrome baby as a "gift from God," Congresswoman Cathy M. Rodgers stated, "There are tremendous resources, support and early intervention available to families. There are medical advances and breakthroughs in the realm of education and early learning. I am extremely grateful to those who have walked this path before me." *NRL News*, May, 2008)

December 20 – "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us," St. John's Gospel states. Perhaps if we could look at each unborn child as a word from God, we would be less likely to destroy those children who each have a unique message to share with the world.

December 27 – A vision for the future: "By seeking holiness and using the gifts God has given us to accomplish His will in our lives, we are contributing mightily to that kingdom we all long for, where there will be no more crying or pain or death. Certainly no abortion. No euthanasia. No assisted suicide. No deep freezing of embryos as though they were merchandise. And no destruction of human life in the name of science." Cardinal Justin Rigali, 1/21/08

Suggested Prayers

November 1 – That we may always be aware that each human is created in the image of God and destined for eternal life, we pray

November 8 – For a greater appreciation of the dignity and gifts of the elderly, we pray

November 15 – That this nation may once again listen to God's message about the sanctity of each human life, we pray

November 22 – May we ever more fully appreciate the gift of human life, especially when it is challenged by "special needs," we pray

November 29 – That we may remain alert to every opportunity to speak of the value of each human life, we pray

December 6 – For all those involved with providing and performing abortions, we pray

December 13 – May we reach out to help women who are struggling with an unplanned pregnancy, we pray

December 20 – That as we prepare to celebrate the birth of God's Son, we may also reach out to welcome each of His unborn sons and daughters, we pray

December 27 – That families may by word and example teach their children that each and every human life deserves respect, we pray

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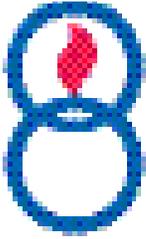
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September/October 2009

More News

Planned Parenthood Leader Attacks Catholic Bishops' Opposition to Abortion in Health Care

The president of Planned Parenthood Federation (PPF), Cecile Richards, writing in the Huffington Post on August 18, harshly criticized the U.S. Catholic bishops for their opposition to abortion coverage in health care legislation.

Richard Doerflinger, associate director of the USCCB's Pro-Life Secretariat, responded, emphasizing that **the taking of a human life in abortion is not health care, and warning that pro-abortion leaders may endanger health care reforms by insisting on abortion funding.**

The PPF president claimed that "comprehensive reproductive health care" was supported by the majority of Americans, but Doerflinger pointed out that polls indicate that a majority of Americans describe themselves as pro-life.

"We don't see the taking of human life, at any stage, as health care at all," Doerflinger told the *Catholic News Agency* on August 19. "Most Americans do not want to pay for abortions," he said.



Photo courtesy of LifeNews.com

"We know that people need health care throughout life from conception to natural death. That is why fetology is a branch of human medicine, which Richards seems unaware of," Doerflinger remarked.

"Universal coverage doesn't mean that Americans are forced to pay for absolutely everything a doctor might be willing to do," Doerflinger explained, saying that such coverage would not, presumably, pay for euthanasia or elective cosmetic surgery.

"Under the House bill, the federal government will require anyone who purchases the [public] plan to purchase abortion coverage. We're very much against that and hope it can be amended out," Doerflinger asserted.

Catholic Medical Association States Ethical Concerns About Health Reform

"We are engaged in the most significant discussion regarding health-care delivery in the United States in fifty years—possibly in our entire national history—considering what is at stake. The outcome will affect the health and well being of all Americans not only medically, but politically and morally, for generations to come. The decisions made now will fundamentally shape how Americans interpret human and constitutional rights to life, religious and civic liberty, and freedom of conscience....

"While attention is rightly paid to the socio-economic aspects of the crisis in health care and delivery, it is essential to acknowledge and respect the fundamental ethical principles at stake. Above all, it is necessary at this time to ensure that any national health-care reform legislation provides respect for human life (e.g., by not funding or mandating abortion as a 'health-care benefit') and respect for the conscience rights of health-care professionals (e.g., providing nothing less than the current protections in federal and state law—and preferably more)." www.cathmed.org/issues_resources/health_care_reform/overview/

Archbishop Chaput: Funding Abortion Is Not "Common Ground"

In a Denver Catholic Register editorial, Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, criticized supporters of abortion who use the term "common ground" to appeal to pro-life citizens while inserting abortion into health care reform legislation.

"No system that allows or helps fund – no matter how subtly or indirectly -- the killing of unborn children, or discrimination against the elderly and persons with special needs, can bill itself as 'common ground,' Archbishop Chaput insists, adding that, "Doing so is a lie."

"The growing misuse of Catholic 'common ground' and 'common good' language in the current health-care debate can only stem from one of two sources: ignorance or cynicism."

The Denver archbishop also relayed the concern of parents of disabled children about troubling aspects of the reforms.

"Lawmakers need to "slow down and listen to people's concerns more honestly -- and learn what the 'common good' really means," Chaput says.