



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Office of Communication

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Official Statement: Health Care Reform, in order to be moral and just, must respect all life.

A joint statement from Archbishop José H. Gomez & Bishop Oscar Cantú

America is preparing to engage in a critical public debate to identify a proper path for this nation to follow toward health care reform. We encourage you to write to your senators and your representative in the Congress, and assure them that no path to health care reform can allow tax dollars to be used to destroy innocent life or discriminate against health care providers who, as a matter of conscience, refuse to "provide, pay for, provide coverage of, or refer for abortion."

We believe that health care is a fundamental right, not a privilege. We believe that any health care designed and adopted must protect and respect the life and dignity of every human person from the moment of conception to natural death. For decades, we, the Bishops of United States, have long supported the principle of making health care available and affordable for all people.

We join with Bishop William F. Murphy, Chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development for the USCCB, who, in his letter to members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, wrote, "Health care reform needs to reflect basic ethical principles. We offer these as a guide:

- a truly universal health policy with respect for human life and dignity;
- access for all with a special concern for the poor and inclusion of legal immigrants;
- pursuing the common good and preserving pluralism including freedom of conscience and variety of options; and
- restraining costs and applying them equitably across the spectrum of payers."

To find out more about what you can do to make your voice heard at this critical moment in the health care debate read the "Action Alert" from the bishops of the United States at this web address: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/2009-07-17-alert-healthcare.pdf>. or by visiting the website of the Archdiocese of San Antonio, www.archsa.org.