



Bulletin from the Diocese of Santa Rosa



U.S. Bishops Urge Positive Health Care Reform September 2009

My Dear People,

With the national debate over the reform of our health care system raging and with our legislators returning to the nation's capital to develop some plan for health care in our country, many people have asked me what the stand of the Church is on the matter of health care reform. The Church does not propose a specific plan or policy but it offers some principles from Catholic Social teaching to shape public policy.

The Catholic bishops of the United States recognize the pressing need for health care reform. Too many American citizens lack basic health care coverage and the cost of health care is becoming prohibitive for many more. Because access to basic health care is a right of every person, the Church rightly considers that the government has a responsibility to ensure access to basic health care for all.

The principles that the bishops have established are these:

- * The nation needs to develop a plan which ensures access to basic health care for all;
- * The nation needs to make sure that the poor and the vulnerable, including legal immigrants, are part of this plan;
- * The nation needs to make sure that abortion, euthanasia or other immoral activities are not mandated or financed with tax payer dollars;
- * Any plan must include conscience protection for all providers, whether institutions or individual persons, and for all recipients;
- * There must be fiscal responsibility in whatever plan is finally established.

There is more information available on health care reform at www.usccb.org/healthcare.

The bishops, without proposing either a public or private sector option, urge that any plan which is developed embrace these principles. As citizens, I urge all Catholics to contact their representatives to ask them to use these principles to evaluate all proposals that are developed.

I trust that the people of our country will work to guarantee that all of us have access to basic health care and that the costs of medical care can be brought under control.

Jesus in his public ministry showed great concern and compassion for the sick and infirmed. We, as his disciples, must continue to imitate Jesus in caring for the sick and infirmed, the elderly and the young. I hope that the final bill on health care reform reflects the principles that will guarantee the right of all persons to basic health care.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am

Your Brother and Servant in the Lord,

Most Reverend Daniel F. Walsh
Bishop of Santa Rosa