



Diocese of Joliet

Office of the Bishop

425 Summit Street
Joliet, Illinois 60435-7155

July 31, 2009

Dear Senator / U.S. Representative,

I write to express hope that the efforts to reform health care will provide affordable and quality care that protects and respects the life and dignity of all people from conception until natural death.

The Catholic approach to health care is shaped by a simple but fundamental principle: Every person has a right to adequate health care. This right flows from the sanctity of human life and the dignity that belongs to all human persons, who are made in the image of God.

The Catholic Community encounters and serves the sick and uninsured in our emergency rooms, shelters and on the doorsteps of our parishes. One out of six patients is cared for in Catholic hospitals. We bring both strong convictions and everyday experience to the issue of health care.

For decades, Congress has respected the right of health care providers to decline involvement in abortion or abortion referrals, without exception, and has respected moral and religious objections in other contexts as well. Health care reform cannot be a vehicle for abandoning freedom of conscience.

I urge you and members of Congress to assure that any health care reform will provide access in a manner that offers accessible, affordable and quality health care that protects and respects the life and dignity of all people, including the unborn. Moreover, I urge you to take steps to ensure that no federal funds are used for abortions.

Please know that you will be in my prayers as you make the difficult decisions ahead. If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend J. Peter Sartain
Bishop of Joliet