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Alexia Kelley Joins the Obama Administration

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

The Obama Administration makes a terrific appointment of Alexia Kelley to the Department of Health & Human Services as Director of Faith-based and Community Partnerships. There's no doubt that Kelley will play a pivotal role in the work of both the Faith-based office and HHS. A Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good press release, text below, includes the details.

From the press release:

Alexia Kelley, former Executive Director of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good, has been named Director of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Alliance congratulates Ms. Kelley on this distinguished appointment, and we offer our deepest appreciation for her tireless service to Catholics in Alliance over the past several years. In her new position, Kelley will play a critical role in building partnerships with faith and community organizations.

Inspired by our faith's teaching that health care is a human right central to serving the common good, Catholics will continue to be front and center in this critical effort.

Kelley co-founded Catholics in Alliance in 2005 to help increase awareness of Catholic social teaching in the media and the public square. Co-author with Chris Korzen of *A Nation for All: How the Catholic Vision of the Common Good Can Save America from the Politics of Division*, Ms. Kelley has helped position the Alliance as a leading lay Catholic voice on issues central to the role of faith in public life.

Vicky Kovari, the National Field Director for Catholics in Alliance, has been named Interim Executive Director. For the past 27 years, Kovari has worked as a community organizer, faith-based advocate and

nonprofit housing developer. Prior to joining the Alliance in 2007, she worked as an organizer with MOSES, a congregation-centered community organizing network based in Detroit. In 2002, Kovari was one of 20 community leaders awarded the Ford Foundation's national Leadership for a Changing World award. She has served on the faculty of the Schools of Social Work at the University of Michigan and Wayne State University.

"While the Alliance is sad to lose such a visionary and energetic leader, we have a talented staff that will continue to work with the Catholic social justice movement to articulate our values in the media and mobilize citizens to put their faith into action," Ms. Kovari said. "At a time when millions lack health care, immigrants are often demonized as 'aliens' and the silent genocide of poverty shames a nation committed to equal opportunity, our core mission remains as vital as ever. We are also poised to make real progress on preventing and reducing abortion. We are committed to finding common ground on this critical issue."

"The Alliance has embodied the call of Vatican II for the laity to engage the core values of our faith in political life," said Steve Schneck, Director of the Life Cycle Institute at The Catholic University of America in Washington. "Their work remains essential for articulating the responsibilities we have as Catholics to bring the gifts of both faith and reason to the always unfinished task of building a more just society."

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