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Thousands of Catholic sisters support health care reform

Dennis Coday | Mar. 17, 2010 NCR Today

Here's a media statement from Network:

> **Catholic Sisters Support Passage of Healthcare Bill**
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> Washington DC: NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, released the text of a letter to Congress supporting healthcare legislation from organizations and communities representing tens of thousands of Catholic Sisters. This letter (text below), which is being delivered to each Member of Congress today, comes just days after a statement in support of passing healthcare reform by Sister Carol Keehan, President and CEO of the Catholic Health Association.
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> NETWORK strongly supports both documents and is working on all levels to promote passage in the next few days of a strong healthcare bill that will extend healthcare coverage to millions more people while eliminating unjust practices in the healthcare field.
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> (See NETWORK's reaction [1] to Catholic Health Association statement.)
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> This is the text of the letter being sent to all Members of Congress:
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> Dear Members of Congress:
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> We write to urge you to cast a life-affirming "yes" vote when the Senate health care bill (H.R. 3590) comes to the floor of the House for a vote as early as this week. We join the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), which represents 1,200 Catholic sponsors, systems, facilities and related organizations, in saying: the time is now for health reform AND the Senate bill is a good way forward.
>
> As the heads of major Catholic women's religious order in the United States , we represent 59,000 Catholic Sisters in the United States who respond to needs of people in many ways. Among our other ministries we are responsible for running many of our nation's hospital systems as well as free clinics throughout the country.
>
> We have witnessed firsthand the impact of our national health care crisis, particularly its impact on women, children and people who are poor. We see the toll on families who have delayed seeking care due to a lack of health insurance coverage or lack of funds with which to pay high deductibles and co-pays. We have counseled and prayed with men, women and children who have been denied health care coverage by insurance companies. We have witnessed early and avoidable deaths because of delayed medical treatment.
>
> The health care bill that has been passed by the Senate and that will be voted on by the House will expand coverage to over 30 million uninsured Americans. While it is an imperfect measure, it is a crucial next step in realizing health care for all. It will invest in preventative care. It will bar insurers from denying

coverage based on pre-existing conditions. It will make crucial investments in community health centers that largely serve poor women and children. And despite false claims to the contrary, the Senate bill will not provide taxpayer funding for elective abortions. It will uphold longstanding conscience protections and it will make historic new investments ? $250 million ? in support of pregnant women. This is the REAL pro-life stance, and we as Catholics are all for it.

Congress must act. We are asking every member of our community to contact their congressional representatives this week. In this Lenten time, we have launched nationwide prayer vigils for health care reform. We are praying for those who currently lack health care. We are praying for the nearly 45,000 who will lose their lives this year if Congress fails to act. We are also praying for you and your fellow Members of Congress as you complete your work in the coming days. For us, this health care reform is a faith mandate for life and dignity of all of our people.

We urge you to vote "yes" for life by voting yes for health care reform in H.R. 3590.

Sincerely,

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Leadership Conference of Women Religious

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Co-Chair Global Peace Initiative of Women
Erie , PA

Sr. Mary Persico, IHM
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(from Sr. Mary Kuhlman)

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Links:

[1] http://www.networklobby.org/press/3-14-10HealthcareReform.htm