

## **Catholic Hospitals in California Release Statement Supporting Conscience Clause Protection for Hospitals & Health Care Workers**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**SACRAMENTO** – William J. Cox, president of the Alliance of Catholic Health Care, released the following statement concerning efforts by the Obama Administration to rescind regulations issued by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to protect hospitals and health care workers from intimidation and discrimination when they exercise their rights under the law not to participate in abortion or other objectionable medical procedures:

“Since the 1973 US Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, abortion has been legal and readily accessible in the United States.

“That same decision also recognized that the moral or ethical considerations of individual hospitals and health care workers had to be considered and that ‘no physician, hospital or hospital personnel [could] be required to violate personally-held moral principles.’

“Nevertheless, the opponents of the conscience rights laws and regulation believe health care providers should be compelled by law to provide or refer for abortion, even if doing so would violate their deepest moral convictions.

“As a practical matter, using state power to coerce health care providers to engage in conduct contrary to their consciences will diminish access to a host of medical services as health care providers committed to their moral and religious beliefs are driven from health care, and other conscientious objectors are deterred from entering the health professions in the first place.

“At issue is whether the Obama administration and Congress intend to protect the civil rights of health care providers by maintaining and enforcing the federal laws that prevent them from being compelled to perform services they find morally objectionable.

“The Administration has taken a step in the right direction by announcing it would support extending, for at least a year, an existing federal law that protects the consciences of health care providers. But doing so at the same time it proposes the elimination of regulatory protections sends a mixed signal, at best.

“If the term ‘choice’ means anything at all, it must apply equally to those who support abortion and those who conscientiously object to it.”

*(The Alliance of Catholic Health Care represents four California Catholic health care systems and their 54 hospitals. It is based in Sacramento, CA)*