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Health Care with a Priority for Accessibility and Affordability for Everyone

THE ISSUE: Principles for consideration as the Legislature examines reform

MINISTRY TRADITION

Our mission, in accordance with Catholic social teaching and values, calls us to serve as advocates for all, particularly the poor and other vulnerable populations. We believe that access to health care is a human right. To that end, health care should be considered an essential building block for a just and free society, like education and other basic goods. The Church and those in Catholic health ministry are committed to moving toward a more just and equitable health care system that ensures health care for everyone.

CHA Minnesota and the Minnesota Catholic Conference are hopeful about the prospects for state level reform that fosters access and affordability. We are committed to participating in the dialogue on this critical issue, and serving as a resource. We offer the following principles for your consideration to guide the conversation:

Principles for Health Care Reform:

- Ensures accessibility for everyone, paying special attention to the poor and vulnerable;
- Health and prevention oriented, with the goal of enhancing the health status of communities;
- Sufficiently and fairly financed;
- Transparent and consensus-driven in allocation of resources, and organized for cost-effective care and administration;
- Patient-centered, and designed to address health needs at all stages of life, from conception to natural death;
- Safe, effective, and designed to deliver the greatest possible quality;
- Protects the conscience rights of health care professionals and the religious liberty of faith-based provider institutions; and
- Refuses to impose, without exemptions, coverage mandates on individuals or employers for services that are beyond the scope of true health care and which violate the consciences or religious liberty of purchasers

POLICY POSITION

CHA Minnesota and the Minnesota Catholic Conference specifically advocate:

Coverage Expansions:

- **Covering all children**—We support the state ensuring that all children have basic health care.

- **Low-income individuals**—We support ongoing efforts to cover all low-income individuals and families through programs such as MinnesotaCare.
- **Strengthening the safety net**—We support initiatives that recognize the full spectrum of care for the poor and uninsured provided by integrated health care systems. Because of our belief in the dignity of all persons, this system should not discriminate based upon immigration status and continue coverage for undocumented “childhood arrivals.”

Coverage Limitations:

- **Health care should promote life and health**—We oppose policies that promote abortion, assisted suicide, euthanasia, or other acts that undermine the dignity of the human person and which must not be included in state health care programs.

Protecting Providers and Ensuring Sufficient Workforce:

- **Health care conscience legislation should be enacted**—We support the rights of providers to offer their services consistent with their values, which is essential to ensuring that we have sufficient professionals and provider institutions willing to offer quality care in Minnesota. To that end, the rights of providers to refuse to offer certain forms of services inconsistent with authentic health care must be clarified in law. The state should not burden the conscience rights and religious liberty of health care providers absent some compelling governmental interest.

Innovation and Reform:

- **Other proposals**—We welcome other proposals to ensure that all currently uninsured individuals would have access to coverage, including measures to allow buy-ins to public health programs; refundable and advanceable tax credits for the purchase of private insurance; federal grants to states to provide coverage for high-risk populations; along with other innovative ideas.

Thank you for your consideration. As ever, we stand ready to assist you as you consider policies that benefit all Minnesotans.

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