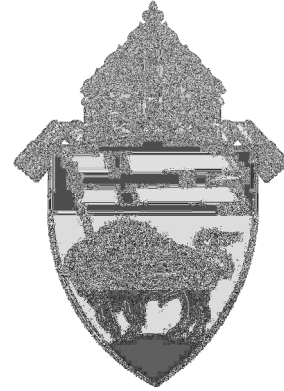

Diocese of Buffalo

Office of Communications



March 18, 2010

Statement of Bishop Edward U. Kmiec on Health Care Reform

As members of Congress prepare to take a final vote on health care reform legislation, it is important to reiterate my position, and that of the United States Conference of Catholic bishops.

For decades, the Catholic Church in this country has advocated for affordable, accessible health care for all, including the poor and vulnerable. However, we cannot, in good conscience, support any bill that violates the longstanding federal policy against the use of federal funds for elective abortions, and health plans that provided coverage for such abortions, a policy upheld in all health programs covered by the Hyde Amendment as well as in the Children's Health Insurance Program and the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program.

In addition, there is an absence of effective and adequate provisions in either the House or Senate bills providing conscience protection when it comes to abortions. Individuals and institutions that have religious and moral reservations should not be compelled to take part in or provide, promote, refer for, discuss or in any way be involved with this heinous procedure. Conscience protections are contained in current law.

I agree with Cardinal Francis George, OMI, archbishop of Chicago and president of the USCCB, who said, "The flaws (in the bill) are so fundamental that they vitiate the good that the bill intends to promote. Assurances that the moral objections to the legislation can be met only after the bill is passed seem a little like asking us, in Midwestern parlance, to buy a pig in a poke."

We are again at a crossroads in this nation. As the spiritual leader of nearly 700,000 Catholics in Western New York, I continue to stand for life, and will adamantly oppose any legislation that jeopardizes life.

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For more information, please contact Kevin Keenan, 716.480.1415.