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**CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES (CHA) STATEMENT
ON USA TODAY/KFF ARTICLE ABOUT CATHOLIC HOSPITALS' CARE FOR
PREGNANT WOMEN**

*Statement by Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM, President and Chief Executive Officer,
Catholic Health Association of the United States*

WASHINGTON, DC – "A recent article by KFF Health News that was published in *USA Today* perpetuates the myth that because Catholic health care providers do not perform elective abortions and remain committed to protecting and upholding the dignity of every human life, our hospitals somehow do not follow accepted medical standards. The fact is that Catholic hospitals in the United States are held to the exact same clinical standards of care and adhere to the same policies as every other hospital in the country.

"Contrary to what was reported in the article, Catholic medical providers who care for pregnant women follow guidelines set forth by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). The article relies on the opinions of two individuals to make the sweeping claim that the ethical and religious directives (ERDs) for Catholic health care contradict ACOG guidelines. In fact, there is nothing in the ERDs that prohibits a Catholic health care provider from providing medically indicated care to a woman who is suffering from serious or life-threatening conditions during pregnancy.

"While there has been a renewed focus on abortion following the 2022 Dobbs decision, the very complex and nuanced treatment decisions physicians must consider in the care for a mother and her baby during pregnancy complications are often overlooked and misconstrued to foster distrust. The abortion debate does not always account for the various ethical and clinical decisions that are required to ensure the best possible outcomes for both the mother and baby.

"The article also incorrectly states that Catholic hospitals are rapidly expanding across the U.S. The number of Catholic hospitals has remained relatively stable during the past three decades, increasing by six percent since 2000 in the face of unprecedented challenges impacting all aspects of health care. The article is correct that Catholic hospitals are often the only medical facilities serving rural areas. This is due to our long-standing commitment to care for patients in need, especially women, children, and those in underserved communities. When other health care providers decide to leave rural markets for financial reasons, Catholic health systems often remain or step in to ensure rural residents continue to have access to high-quality, life-saving care.

"A final concern about the article was the implied attack on the role of spirituality in health care. The authors make a point to report about a blessing that occurred in a hospital, which apparently was included to underscore the false premise that Catholic teaching and science are incompatible. On the contrary, Catholic hospitals see our faith as a call to ensure everyone has access to quality, compassionate care,

regardless of one's religion, race, ethnicity, gender, or other identity. It is extremely disappointing the KFF Health News would write an article that suggests Catholic health care's long-standing commitment to providing care that recognizes the sacredness of each individual - from conception to natural death - somehow constrains care."

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The Catholic Health Association of the United States is the national leadership organization of the Catholic health ministry, representing the largest nonprofit provider of health care services in the nation.

- *1 in 7 patients in the U.S. is cared for in a Catholic hospital each day.*
- *Catholic health care, which includes more than 2,200 hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities, systems, sponsors, and related organizations, serves the full continuum of health care across our nation.*
- *Learn more at www.chausa.org.*