



March 26, 2021

The Honorable Rochelle P. Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Walensky,

We write to urge you to take immediate action to extend the Centers for Disease Control's eviction moratorium for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also urge you to strengthen the moratorium so that it is automatic and universal, closes loopholes in the moratorium's protections, and enforces those protections.

The Catholic Church teaches that access to safe, decent, and affordable housing is a human right as well as a demand of the common good.¹ We also know that housing is a key social determinant of health, which is especially important during a pandemic. Individuals and families without stable housing have less opportunity to protect themselves and others through social distancing, are more vulnerable to contracting the coronavirus, and are more likely to need acute care if they become infected.²

Even before COVID-19, this nation faced an affordable housing crisis. There is an insufficient supply of low-rent housing, and federal assistance has failed to keep pace, with people of color most likely to be cost-burdened by housing expenses.³ It will be necessary to invest in long term solutions for thriving families and a more equitable society.

We are grateful for the CDC's previous efforts to extend the eviction moratorium and the administration's efforts to expand funding for rental assistance and to defend the moratorium in the courts. We look forward to continuing to work with you and the administration to provide support for those in need and to protect tenants until rental assistance is widely available in communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley
Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Chairman, Committee on
Domestic Justice
and Human Development

Sister Donna Markham, OP, Ph.D.
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA

Sister Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO
Catholic Health Association
of the United States

¹ See, e.g., *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 166.

² <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/estimated-emergency-and-observational-quarantine-bed-need-for-the-us-homeless-population-related-to-covid-19-exposure-by-county-projected-hospitalizations-intensive-care-units-and-mortality/>

³ <https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/black-and-hispanic-renters-face-greatest-threat-eviction-pandemic>