

**Statement for the Record of the Catholic Health Association  
In Support of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2003**

**Before the Hearing of the House Education and Workforce Committee  
Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations  
"Genetic Non-Discrimination: Examining the Implications for Workers and  
Employers"**

July 22, 2004

The Catholic Health Association (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,000 Catholic health care sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations, would like to commend the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations, and its chairman, Representative Sam Johnson, for holding a hearing on the problem of genetic nondiscrimination.

As the Subcommittee is no doubt aware, last year the United States Senate overwhelmingly passed the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2003 (S 1053). CHA strongly supports this legislation, which we believe would serve as an important compliment to other federal and state laws that recognize the need to protect an individual's genetic information from being used in a discriminatory manner in the health insurance and employment markets.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Prohibit health insurers from restricting enrollment or adjusting fees on the basis of predictive genetic information
- Bar health insurers and employers from requiring genetic testing and from obtaining predictive genetic information
- Prevent employers from discriminating based on genetic information in all areas of employment, including hiring and compensation

Genetic science has seen marvelous growth over the past several years, and Catholic social teaching validates its use when respect for personal dignity, the defense of human life, and support of the common good is its goal. CHA believes that S 1053 reflects this principle. It is our hope that today's hearing will be the first step toward passage of the legislation by the House of Representatives before the end of the 108th Congress.