



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

June 22, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, I am writing to urge you to reconsider your decisions to withdraw the United States from the World Health Organization (WHO). At a time when the world faces a global pandemic and the rates of infection dramatically increase in the developing world, a global response that includes the United States is essential to build solidarity between people within our own country and around the world.

For over 100 years, through yellow fever, the flu of 1918 and up to today, Catholic health providers have been at the frontline of addressing global pandemics. We increasingly hear from our sister Catholic organizations in other regions of the world looking for information and resources on how best to prepare and respond to covid-19. As Pope Francis and Archbishop Ivan Jurkovič, the Holy See's representative to the World Health Assembly have stated, the current pandemic requires a renewed solidarity and coordination of action at the international level to fulfill our commitment that "the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters living in the cities and peripheries of every part of the world, not be abandoned."¹

Thanks in part to global cooperation through the WHO, our nation and the world has been able to combat Ebola, smallpox, polio, rubella, measles, bird flu, HIV/AIDS and wide variety of communicable and noncommunicable diseases. The successes of these efforts have not only saved lives around the world but have saved millions of lives here in the United States. The WHO plays a critical role in ensuring that organizations worldwide have access to the best practices and information to combat disease. The U.S. contribution to the WHO, through financial resources and clinical expertise, has played a critical role in strengthening the

¹ Pope Francis, Urbi et Orbi Message, 12 April 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/urbi/documents/papa-francesco_20200412_urbi-et-orbi-pasqua.html, Intervention of the Holy See to the 73rd World Health Assembly, 18-19 May 2020, <https://nuntiusge.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/20200518.pdf>

organization, helping to coordinate a global response and providing information for countries that lack basic health infrastructures.

While reforming and strengthening the WHO continues to be critical for ensuring it fulfills its mandate, withdrawing from the organization at the height of the pandemic is counterproductive and only ensures that the U.S. will have little influence on these efforts. Indeed, now is the time to stand in solidarity with those in need around the world to save lives and provide hope. CHA strongly urges you to reconsider this decision and ensure the U.S. remains a leader in global health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sister Mary Haddad". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Sister Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO

CC: House Foreign Affairs Committee
Senate Foreign Relations