



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

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Contact: Angela Botticella, abotticella@chausa.org

*Statement by Sister Carol Keehan, DC, President & Chief Executive Office
Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA)*

**The Catholic Health Association on the Establishment of
the Conscience and Religious Freedom Division of OCR at HHS**

The Catholic Health Association looks forward to learning more about the newly established Conscience and Religious Freedom Division of Office of Civil Rights at the Department of Health and Human Services to bring awareness of the importance of conscience protections in healthcare. HHS and its divisions carry the primary responsibility for promoting the health of everyone in our nation. They have a special role in promoting and protecting caregivers as well.

Conscience is one area that is sacred to all Americans. It is best protected by promoting respect and dialogue especially in a pluralistic society.

Catholic health care has always treasured the opportunity to care for everyone, not only those of other religious beliefs, races and backgrounds but even in conflict situations such as in wars and situations where there is a profound difference of opinions. Our deeply held religious and moral convictions are the source of both the work we do and the limits on what we will do. The conscience of Catholic health care does not allow us to participate in certain procedures we feel are an assault on the dignity of human life, such as abortion and euthanasia. That same conscience compels us to love and respect others who feel differently.

While there are certain procedures we do not do in our hospitals, there is no one who is not welcome for the care that we do provide in our hospitals.

This is a moment where the decency and integrity of the American people should frame the discussion. One more polarized and politicized argument is not going to serve the people of this nation well. CHA looks forward to participating in a productive dialogue on this important issue.

The Catholic Health Association of the United States is the national leadership organization of the Catholic health ministry, representing the largest not-for-profit provider of health care services in the nation.

- *1 in 6 patients in the U.S. is cared for in a Catholic hospital each day.*
- *Catholic health care, comprised of 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.*