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**Proposed Changes to Census Bureau's Official Poverty Measure —
Devastating for Low-income Families**

WASHINGTON, DC – Proposed changes to the Census Bureau's Official Poverty Measure (OPM) could be devastating for millions of low-income families and children and result in the loss of basic support services, said Sr. Carol Keehan, DC, president and CEO, of The Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA).

"Because the Official Poverty Measure plays a critical role in determining program eligibility for millions of Americans, it is critical that inflation is accurately reflected when the government sets annual poverty thresholds," said Keehan.

Using the Chained Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers would lower the inflation growth rate and lead to over half a million people losing access to health care coverage through Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program, with millions more receiving lower premium tax credits for ACA marketplace health insurance. The poverty guidelines set by OPM determine a person's eligibility for Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly food stamps) and many other federal safety net programs.

"CHA urges policy makers to conduct an in-depth, qualitative analysis of the impact of any proposed changes for how poverty guidelines are calculated," added Keehan. "We know that social determinants of health, such as food, housing and health care, play a major role in improving individual and population health and decreasing health disparities. Therefore, it is critical that we have an accurate measure of poverty to ensure programs that improve the health of individuals are available to those in need."

CHA shared its concerns in a letter submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in response to a Request for Comment on the *Consumer Inflation Measures Produced by Federal Statistical Agencies*. To view CHA's June 21, 2019 letter, please visit <https://www.chausa.org/advocacy>.

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