



*We Will Empower Bold Change to Elevate  
Human Flourishing.<sup>SM</sup>*

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Contact: Brian Reardon  
breardon@chausa.org

### **CHA Statement on “Laudate Deum”**

*Statement by Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM, President and CEO*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Catholic Health Association (CHA) welcomes “Laudate Deum,” Pope Francis’s renewed call to all people of goodwill to take urgent action on the climate crisis. In “Laudate Deum,” Pope Francis cites overwhelming scientific evidence that the world is facing a climate crisis that is caused by human activity. He warns us that as global temperatures continue to rise, we are pushing the planet towards a “breaking point” and unleashing destructive changes that cannot be reversed and that disproportionately affect the health and well-being of poor and vulnerable communities.

Pope Francis also reflects on why the world has made so little progress on this crisis despite its profound, widespread negative effects on society. He acknowledges powerful economic powers who use their political clout to maintain the status quo and “whose concern is with the greatest profit possible at minimal cost and in the shortest amount of time.” (LD 13).

Despite these challenges, Pope Francis calls on us to have hope and identifies key requirements to ensure solutions that serve all people, not just the most powerful. While he laments the ineffectiveness of international conferences and agreements to take meaningful, accountable action on climate change, he urges a “multilateralism “from below” and not simply determined by the elites of power and that “citizens control political power (LD38). Pope Francis also acknowledges that the most effective solutions to the climate crisis will not be from individual efforts alone “but above all from major political decisions on the national and international level (LD69).

The Catholic health ministry recognizes the power of policy. CHA and its members supported the Inflation Reduction Act, the largest investment in clean energy and climate action in U.S. history. CHA and its members also continue to work with policymakers to implement changes to help health care reduce its environmental footprint and increase awareness that environmental health is critical to human health.

The Catholic health ministry has been working towards a new culture of environmental awareness in health care by participating in coalitions and groups such as America’s All In, Race to Zero, Health Care Without Harm’s Health Care Climate Council, Practice Greenhealth, the Catholic Climate Covenant and the Laudato Si’ Action Platform. Through these initiatives, Catholic health care can ensure the values laid out in Laudate Deum and Laudato Si’ – human dignity, justice, and equity - are recognized in health care environmental sustainability efforts.

Pope Francis closes “Laudate Deum” with a reminder to the Catholic faithful of the motivations for this work. He calls on us to remember that we are part of nature and “that human life is incomprehensible and

unsustainable without other creatures. For “as part of the universe... all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect” (LD67).

Those of us who serve in Catholic health care must use this motivation to push more urgently for changes in how we live and work and heed Pope Francis’ call to “bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.” (LD 71). As a leading ministry of the Church in the United States, we will continue to raise our collective voice to call for bold change in environmental policies and practices that are critical to promoting human flourishing.

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*The Catholic Health Association of the United States is the national leadership organization of the Catholic health ministry, representing the largest nonprofit provider of health care services in the nation.*

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- *Catholic health care, which includes 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.*
- *Learn more at [www.chausa.org](http://www.chausa.org).*