

UPDATED: Pulpit Announcement & Prayer Petition

Instructions: During October, November and January, diocesan and parish leaders were asked by the U.S. bishops to distribute three Nationwide Bulletin Inserts on health care reform. Thank for your great cooperation. On November 7, the U.S. House passed major health care reform that reaffirms the essential, longstanding and widely supported policy against using federal funds for elective abortion coverage. On December 24, the U.S. Senate rejected this policy and passed health care reform that requires federal funds to help subsidize and promote health plans that cover elective abortions. Congressional leaders are now trying to figure out how the rules of the House and Senate could allow the final passage of a modified bill that would satisfy disagreements between House and Senate versions. Provisions against abortion funding and in favor of conscience rights, affordability and access to health care for immigrants must be part of a fair and just health care reform bill. The bishops, who have long supported genuine health care reform, oppose this legislation unless and until these criteria are met. **Given the upcoming final votes, the U.S. bishops have asked that the attached [USCCB Nationwide Bulletin Insert \(Spanish Insert\)](#) be distributed in any way possible as soon as possible.** Final votes may take place as early as this weekend.

To be announced at all Masses on the weekend when the Bulletin Insert is distributed:

“Congress continues to debate health care reform. While the House passed a health care bill that prevents the federal government from funding elective abortions, and includes provisions making health care affordable and accessible for all, the Senate rejected this and passed a bill that requires federal funds to help subsidize and promote health plans that cover elective abortions, while forcing purchasers to pay directly for other people’s abortions. Congressional leaders are now trying to figure out how the rules of the House and Senate could allow the final passage of a modified bill that would satisfy disagreements between House and Senate versions. Final votes may take place as early as this weekend. The U.S. bishops continue to strongly oppose abortion funding, and call for critical improvements in conscience protection, affordability for the poor and vulnerable, and access to health care for immigrants.

In your pews/bulletins today, you’ll find a flier/bulletin insert from the U.S. Bishops Conference asking you to please contact your congressional representatives immediately and urge them to address these moral issues. The flier/bulletin insert includes a web address that allows you to send an email message to Congress with a click of a button. The bishops have asked for our swift action and our prayers. Thank you for your help. We can help make sure that health care reform will protect the lives, dignity, conscience and health of all. Health care reform should be about saving lives, not destroying them.”

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

That Congress will act to ensure that needed health care reform will truly protect the life, dignity and health of all and that we will raise our voices to protect the unborn and the most vulnerable and to preserve freedom of conscience. We pray to the Lord.

Please encourage parishioners to pray for this effort as well. More information can be found at www.usccb.org/healthcare.