



DIOCESE *of* LACROSSE  
OFFICE OF THE CHANCERY  
DIOCESAN ARCHIVES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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NEWS RELEASE

**STATEMENT OF THE  
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE**

**On the Letter Issued by “Network” on Healthcare Reform**

On March 17<sup>th</sup>, a letter issued to the media by “Network,” a social justice lobby group of some women religious, urged passage by Congress of the current Senate healthcare bill.

The Network letter sadly contradicts the Catholic Bishops of the United States, who, after working tirelessly for legitimate healthcare reform, had concluded that the current Senate bill would result in “expansion of abortion funding and of policies forcing everyone to pay for abortions...and must be opposed unless and until these serious moral problems are addressed” (March 15 letter of Cardinal Francis George, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops - USCCB).

The Network letter calls the bishops’ conclusion that taxpayer funding of elective abortion would result from the bill a “false claim.” This misleading and unsupported statement sows confusion about the truth of the matter and about who speaks for the Church. In the end, statements like this end up providing “cover” for politicians and others who want to appear pro-life but who are willing to see abortion deceptively included as part of health care.

It is particularly unfortunate that signatories of the Network letter include those whose religious orders have in times past heroically provided access to health care without compromising ethical principles.

**The Roman Catholic Diocese of La Crosse strongly stands with the completely clear statement of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, echoed by the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, opposing the current version of the health care legislation under consideration which expands funding for the termination of unborn human beings and violates conscience.**

**The provision of abortion funding and the lack of adequate conscience protection do not expand justice for all. Health care at the expense of lives of the unborn is not social justice.**

Statements from individuals and groups such as Network directly undermine the tireless work of the United States Bishops and the pro-life faithful in America and in the Diocese of La Crosse.

**- MORE -**

To learn what you can do at this critical time, please see the Diocesan website  
[www.dioceseoflacrosse.com](http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com)

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Andrew Gaertner  
*Office of Stewardship & Development*

Stan Gould  
*The Catholic Times*

The U.S. Bishops and the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious have officially responded to the Network letter as follows:

## **UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

### ***Clarification***

**Washington** - A recent letter from Network, a social justice lobby of sisters, grossly overstated whom they represent in a letter to Congress that was also released to media.

Network's letter, about health care reform, was signed by a few dozen people, and despite what Network said, they do not come anywhere near representing 59,000 American sisters.

The letter had 55 signatories, some individuals, some groups of three to five persons. One endorser signed twice.

There are 793 religious communities in the United States.

The math is clear. Network is far off the mark.

Sister Mary Ann Walsh  
*Director of Media Relations*  
*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

## **STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF WOMEN RELIGIOUS**

March 17, 2010

In a March 15<sup>th</sup> statement, Cardinal Francis George, OMI, of Chicago, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke on behalf of the United States Bishops in opposition to the Senate's version of the health care legislation under consideration because of its expansion of abortion funding and its lack of adequate provision for conscience protection. Recent statements from groups like Network, the Catholic Health Association and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) directly oppose the Catholic Church's position on critical issues of health care reform.

The Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious, the second conference of Major Superiors of Women Religious in the United States, believes the Bishops' position is the authentic teaching of the Catholic Church.

Protection of life and freedom of conscience are central to morally responsible judgment. We join the bishops in seeking ethically sound legislation.

Mother Mary Quentin Sheridan, R.S.M.  
*President*  
*On behalf of the Membership of the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious*