



# CATHOLIC MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

*Upholding the Principles of the Catholic Faith in the Science and Practice of Medicine*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Catholic Medical Association Deplores Assault on Conscience Rights by the Obama Administration**

**DATELINE** March 3, 2009 – The Catholic Medical Association (CMA) deplores the decision of the Obama administration to overturn the HHS provider conscience rule (HHS Rule) enacted on December 20, 2008.

According to CMA President Louis C. Breschi, M.D., “This decision represents a major setback for Americans—particularly for physicians and health care providers—regarding conscience rights under the Constitution and federal law. And it shows, unfortunately, how far the Obama administration is willing to go to defend and promote abortion.”

John F. Brehany, Ph.D., CMA’s Executive Director, explained that, “there is nothing ‘pro-choice’ about President Obama’s support for abortion. He has already sent millions of taxpayers’ dollars to overseas agencies that promote abortion as a method of family planning, and pledged millions of dollars to the United Nations Population Fund despite its support for China’s policy of forced abortion to achieve ‘one-child’ targets. Now, Obama is showing that he is willing to force physicians and health care providers in America to participate in abortion and other actions that violate both their conscience and their medical judgment.”

Brehany continued, “The HHS Rule protects a fundamental freedom of all Americans—to religious liberty and freedom of conscience. Moreover, the HHS Rule faithfully reflects and applies 30 years of established federal laws protecting the conscience rights of all health care providers. These laws were enacted after public debate and with bipartisan support. In addition to applying this law, the HHS Rule also calls for education about this essential right, for certification of compliance by any entity receiving government funding, and establishes remedies under the law for discrimination and coercion. All of these goals are worthy of support.”

Dr Breschi noted, “President Obama evidently thinks you can deny conscience rights on some issues, but respect them on others. He is wrong. Denying respect for conscience on one issue will threaten everyone’s right to conscience. In addition, this will not lead to better health care. Rather, access to quality health care—particularly for women—will be reduced as conscientious physicians depart from some medical specialties, such as Ob-Gyn, or leave the practice of medicine altogether. So President Obama’s decision could undermine not only people’s right to choose a physician who shares their values, but also their ability, when in need, to have access to a physician at all.”

The Catholic Medical Association encourages everyone to join together to fight this attack on conscience, freedom, and professionalism in medicine.