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CMA Issues Statement on SCHIP Reauthorization

May 7, 2007 – The Catholic Medical Association has added its voice to those of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Health Association, and Catholic Charities USA, in calling upon the U.S. Congress and President Bush to reauthorize the State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Ensuring access to health care for uninsured children in America is not only wise public policy, it is the right thing to do.

At the same time, this is a critical time to correct some significant flaws in the original legislation. Because of these flaws, some states have been able to use SCHIP funds to pay for abortion, contraception, sterilization, all without the knowledge or consent of the children's parents. Other states, including Michigan, have stipulated that health plans that want to participate in the SCHIP program must first agree to provide the full range of "services" funded by SCHIP – including the objectionable procedures just mentioned. Finally, some states have actually directed SCHIP funds to adults and children who do not meet the income requirements in the original legislation. This means that middle class children, and even adults, have had their health care funded with money that was meant for uninsured children.

The CMA calls upon Congress and President Bush to promote the health of children (by funding real health care and by de-funding procedures that undermine children's physical health and moral well-being), protect parental rights, and uphold the conscience rights of health plans that object to participating in the funding of such services. The whole community will benefit, as monies directed to more appropriate health services will improve the health of individuals and the community.

The CMA requests that Congress and President Bush, in re-authorizing the SCHIP program:

- Stipulate that SCHIP funds may not be used to pay for abortion, contraception, sterilization, and other so-called "family planning" services;
- Ensure that funding be used to help children who are uninsured.

Together, we can make a difference in the lives of children and families, and provide a stronger foundation for building a culture of life in America.