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PRESS RELEASE

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Catholic Medical Association Offers Prayers and Condolences to the Parents of Alfie Evans

(PHILADELPHIA, PA)— April 28, 2018 The Catholic Medical Association (CMA) offers its prayers and condolences to the parents of Alfie Evans. During these last weeks, CMA members have followed the extensive media coverage reporting on the condition and possible treatment options for Alfie Evans. Based on various reports, the doctors treating Alfie seemed to indicate he was suffering from a severe neurological disorder which would be terminal. His parents, supported by the Polish and Italian governments, Pope Francis, and Gesu Hospital were holding out hope for some possible treatment. The British High Court of Appeal blocked treatment and possible transfer to another country.

Many of the same concerns and questions that were raised last year in the CMA's statement on Charlie Gard could be readdressed. Who has the authority to be a decision-maker? What are the rights of conscience of the family and how are they protected? Also, what are the rights of conscience of physicians and how are they protected? Determining what treatment constitutes a disproportionate burden to the patient is the role of the patient or the patient's surrogate. Such decisions require input from the physician but should not be made by the physician nor the government. Similarly, a physician should not be forced by the family or the government to engage in procedures that do not offer reasonable expectation of benefit, cause harm, or violate rights of conscience. Such policies would violate the trust enshrined in the physician-patient relationship.

The CMA could make no judgment in his care without direct access to the clinical facts that have led to these decisions. We have kept the case in prayer.

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The Catholic Medical Association is a national, physician-led community of over 2,400 healthcare professionals consisting of 103 local guilds. CMA's mission is to inform, organize, and inspire its members, in steadfast fidelity to the teachings of the Catholic Church, to uphold the principles of the Catholic faith in the science and practice of medicine.

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