

Memorandum

Date: October 29, 2009

From: Bishop Martin Amos

To: Pastors

Re: URGENT: Nationwide USCCB Bulletin Insert on Health Care Reform

Dear Pastor:

For many years, the U.S. bishops have supported decent health care for all, based on our teaching that health care is essential for human life and dignity and our community's experience in providing health care and assisting those without coverage. We have always insisted that health care reform must protect life, not threaten it and that it cannot be used as a vehicle to advance abortion. Specifically, we have clearly required that longstanding federal protections that restrict abortion funding and mandates that protect conscience rights must be reflected in health reform legislation. In addition, we have also focused on efforts to insure that coverage is affordable and that immigrants have better health care as a result of reform. The USCCB principles and priorities are outlined in a series of letters to Congress, fact sheets and other materials on the USCCB health care reform website (www.usccb.org/healthcare).

The debate and decisions on health care reform are reaching decisive moments.

The USCCB is asking for our special help in activating our Catholic people. **I support this request with an appeal that you activate the people of your parish in the following ways:**

*Distribute the enclosed “Bulletin Insert” in every parish bulletin and/or pews or at church entrances as soon as possible and maintain a supply of the insert in the back of your church for the next several weeks.

*Ensure that enclosed “Pulpit Announcements” are made on the weekend when the “Bulletin Insert” is distributed and the following weekend in order to stress the urgency of parishioners sending a message to Congress.

*Add the enclosed “Prayer Petition/Suggested Prayer of the Faithful,” to prayers at Mass up to the time Congressional votes on health care legislation occur, which may take place as soon as early November.

*Direct people to the USCCB health care reform website for updates, additional tools and resources (www.usccb.org/healthcare) and to Glenn Leach (leach@davenportdiocese.org) for local insight and updates within the Social Action Office at the diocese.

Finally, please encourage the people of your parish to pray that Congress will act to insure that needed health care reform will truly protect life, dignity and health care of all and that we will raise our voices to protect the unborn and the most vulnerable and to preserve our freedom of conscience.