



News Release

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Missouri Bishops Call on HHS to Rescind Contraceptive Mandate

Sept. 9, 2011, JEFFERSON CITY, MO — The Missouri bishops are asking the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to rescind a federal regulation that would require health plans to include coverage for abortion drugs, contraceptives and sterilization procedures.

The letter to HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius states that the mandate “violates religious liberty and rights of conscience, and would undermine Missouri law.”

Missouri law allows those with moral, ethical or religious objections to opt out of the contraceptive mandate found in state law.

According to the bishops’ statement, “[R]equiring Catholic individuals and institutions to pay for and provide abortion drugs, contraceptives and sterilization procedures contrary to Catholic teaching is an affront to the religious liberty upon which our nation was founded.”

In an Aug. 24, 2010, executive order, President Obama assured Americans that the newly enacted federal health care law would not fund abortion and that rights of conscience would be protected. The bishops state that “If this mandate is adopted, that promise is broken.”

HHS has invited comments on the final interim regulation. Comments must be submitted by Sept. 30. The Missouri Catholic Conference has activated its Citizens Network and urged Catholics to submit comments opposing the contraceptive mandate found in the final interim rule.

For more information, please contact Melissa Varner at varnerm@mocatholic.org.

