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March 15, 2010

Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of the 17,000 members of the Christian Medical Association, I urge you to vote NO on the healthcare overhaul bill approved by the Senate, H.R. 3590. The CMA strongly opposes this legislation because it:

1. **Fails to provide strong conscience protections for healthcare professionals.**

A national survey of faith-based physicians (available at www.Freedom2Care.org) shows that the failure to protect the rights of healthcare professionals to decline to participate not only in abortion but also in other morally controversial procedures and prescriptions, may cause up to 95 percent of faith-based physicians to leave medicine. Since faith-based physicians provide much of the care for poor patients and those in medically underserved areas, their exodus would lead to a national crisis of access to care of catastrophic proportion.

2. **Allows direct federal funding of elective abortions in community health centers.**

The CMA strongly supports funding for community health centers, and many of our physicians work full-time, part-time and on a volunteer basis caring for the poor. But we cannot support federal funding for abortions that will result in yet more abortions while violating the clear will of the American people who do not want their tax dollars used to pay for abortions.

3. **Allows federal funds to subsidize health plans covering abortions.**

Such funding, however cleverly designed to obscure the result, clearly violates the longstanding Hyde amendment and related laws. Such funding also violates the President's oft-repeated pledge to maintain the status quo on abortion funding. Besides the obvious moral wrong of funding abortions, this policy will also have negative economic consequences. Incentivized by new insurance subsidies, abortionists will simply raise prices and increase their profits. Increased abortions will rob the country of much of the younger generation that otherwise would help avert the financial strain of a top-heavy older population.

Other concerns with this bill include further government intrusion into physician-patient decision making and the allocation of medical resources, the absence of meaningful tort reform that is desperately needed to prevent the loss of some of our best physicians—especially obstetricians and gynecologists, and the lack of bipartisan and public support that should undergird any legislation of this magnitude.

After voting NO on this bill, we urge you to pursue a new bipartisan, measured and focused approach to true healthcare reform. Seven key principles our members look for in healthcare reform include cost containment, quality assurance, access for the poor, economic fairness, ethical protection, prevention focus and personal responsibility.

Thank you very much for your consideration of these views, and for your public service.

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