



Pro-Life Activities

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Date: January 20, 2012

To: Diocesan Pro-Life Directors
State Catholic Conference Directors

From: Richard Doerflinger

Re: New Materials on HHS Contraceptive Mandate

Today the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that it will NOT be making any significant change in its nationwide mandate for private health plans to cover sterilization and all FDA-approved contraceptives, including drugs that can cause an early abortion. The only new change is that nonprofit religious organizations that do not provide such coverage now, but are not protected by the mandate's extremely narrow "religious employer" exemption, will be given an additional year to comply with this unchanged mandate (August 2013 instead of 2012). HHS said it plans to require even religious organizations to notify employees of their policy and to provide them with information on other sources for low-cost contraceptives and sterilizations.

You should already have received our initial USCCB press release with comments from our president, Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan. Also see the video featuring Cardinal-Designate Dolan on the USCCB home page, www.usccb.org. The direct link to the video if you want to share it with others: <http://bcove.me/ob5itz9v>.

Here are some more items to help you:

- The [transcript](#) of Cardinal-designate Dolan's video remarks
- A set of five brief "[talking points](#)" to cite in talking with media
- A more detailed "[backgrounder](#)" summarizing the key points from the USCCB's earlier comment letter to HHS about this mandate
- A "[question and answer](#)" fact sheet with questions you might be asked.

These last two items are also on our web site at www.usccb.org/conscience.

We are assisting many outside experts and religious leaders, Catholic and other, in issuing their own press releases and making their own comments to media about this imposition on religious freedom.

You will be hearing much more from us in future but we hope these immediate materials are of help. Thank you!