CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE
CHRIST CENTERED CARE

The Reconciliation Bill Must Protect Life and Safeguard Funding for the Underserved

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As H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill, is going through the houses of Congress, the Catholic Health Care Leadership Alliance urges the House and the Senate to be steadfast in protecting unborn life and human dignity, to sufficiently fund state provider taxes even though adjustments to the program understandably need to be made, and to protect the truly impoverished in any measures that reform Medicaid. Above all, we urge Congress to deal correctly with the foundational moral issue in health care: upholding the right to life.

The Catholic Health Care Leadership Alliance (CHCLA) represents the interests of Catholic health care professionals, Catholic medical institutions, Catholic bioethicists, Catholic health care organizations, and countless Catholic citizens across America that are committed first and foremost to protecting the God given dignity of the human person and caring for the needs of every patient, as a whole person, in body, mind, and soul. We follow in the footsteps of the healing ministry of Jesus Christ who created Catholic health care and who founded health care as it is understood today. In approaching health care policy questions, we chiefly apply the following Catholic social teaching principles: (1) human dignity and right to life of every person from conception until natural death; (2) the individual right of conscience and religious freedom; (3) the moral obligation to act in solidarity with those persons who are most vulnerable and in need of care; (4) protecting access to medical care for all, especially the poor and vulnerable; (5) the principle of subsidiarity that teaches that societal problems are best solved through solutions closest to the problem by working through the family, the Church, the community, civil society, and local and state government; (6) respect and protection of the freedom of the patient to determine his or her own medical interventions; and (7) patient-centered care that places the human person at the center of medical care, inclusive of protecting the patient-doctor relationship.

Applying these principles to H.R. 1, the CHCLA strongly applauds provisions that would defund Planned Parenthood and prohibit taxpayer funding of abortion. Defunding Planned Parenthood alone would directly save thousands of lives over the years ahead. We also applaud provisions in the reconciliation package that would defund transgender procedures in the Medicaid and CHIP programs and therefore protect Americans from serious physical, mental, and emotional harms. The reconciliation package in Congress could achieve historic advances for life and human dignity by protecting the unborn and pregnant mothers and by shielding children and families from transgender procedures.

However, we believe this legislation can be greatly improved by sufficiently funding state provider taxes that help urban and rural hospitals care for the poor and underserved. While state provider taxes are imperfect and policy adjustments to this program are important to consider, state provider taxes remain a key mechanism to help states meet the local demands for care. Failure to adequately fund state provider taxes could endanger the ability of some hospitals to care for local populations in need. Finally, even as we applaud many provisions in this legislation, we implore the Senate and House to meaningfully protect medical care for the truly poor and vulnerable in the Medicaid program. The Medicaid program is clearly in need of reform. However, the principle of justice demands that Medicaid reforms first seek to preserve medical care for vulnerable people who are truly in need of a social safety net.