

Obama to Discuss Health Reform With Faith Community

✖ The debate over health reform has divided Christians, who have launched campaigns both denouncing and championing the controversial legislation.

Tomorrow President Obama is expected to participate in a conference call to address the faith community's concerns about health reform. Organized by Faith in Public Life, the call is to include such leaders as Florida megachurch pastor Joel Hunter, Sojourners President Jim Wallis and Atlanta pastor Cynthia Hale.

The address, which is open to the public and will be streamed live online, comes as part of the "40 Days for Health Reform" campaign that includes a series of prayer rallies and a National Healthcare Sermon Weekend Aug. 28-30.

The effort, led by a coalition of more than 30 religious denominations and organizations, launched last week with a national television ad featuring evangelical, Catholic and mainline pastors calling for health reform.

Meanwhile, a coalition of more than 40 pro-life leaders has released a video that claims all the pro-life gains of the last 35 years will be in jeopardy if the president's health reform plan is implemented. Although the bill does not explicitly state whether abortion would be mandated coverage under a government health system, pro-life leaders say the bill's ambiguity on the issue would eventually lead to taxpayer-funded abortion and the largest expansion of the practice since Roe v. Wade. (Click [here](#) to watch the pro-life video.)

"Without an explicit exclusion of abortion in any health care reform bill, abortion will be included," said Marjorie

Dannenfelser, president of the pro-life Susan B. Anthony List in the video produced by Stop the Abortion Mandate.

Comprised of a cross-section of pro-life groups—including Focus on the Family, Concerned Women for America, TheCall and the Traditional Values Coalition—Stop the Abortion Mandate is calling on Christians to lobby their congressional representatives to oppose the legislation.

Family Research Council and Focus on the Family Action also have launched grass-roots lobbying campaigns against the bill. Since the beginning of August, tens of thousands of letters have been sent to Congress through efforts led by the American Center for Law and Justice and the Susan B. Anthony List.

Christians on both sides of the debate argue that health reform is a moral issue. Reform supporters say thousands of uninsured Americans delay care for serious illnesses or are saddled with exorbitant bills for health care.

“As pastor of an urban-core church within walking distance of major hospitals, it seemed like some people in our congregation might as well have lived 1,000 miles away from those shining institutions,” said John Hay Jr., pastor of West Morris Street Free Methodist Church in Indianapolis. “They often put off a serious health problem until it reaches chronic stages and then make an emergency run. This is no way for the most blessed country in the world to treat its most vulnerable citizens.”

Bill opponents argue that reforming health insurance does not have to include a government takeover of health care. In a series of commentaries opposing the “health scare” reform legislation, prophetic minister Rick Joyner said the proposed health system would lead to euthanasia and an alarming move toward socialism.

“I see doom for many people ... because this thing will end up in rationing very fast, if not immediately,” said Joyner,

founder of MorningStar Ministries. “Then you’ve got to choose, who’s going to receive the health care? Who’s going to receive what may save their lives? ... This is about a whole lot more than health care; it’s about control.”