

RESOURCE ROUNDUP

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The Hippocratic Resource

(A Statewide Organization of Louisiana Physicians, Dentists, Nurses, Therapists and Other Health Professionals)

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"I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked ... I will not give to a woman an instrument to produce an abortion"

Dear Colleague:

Since our last issue, the two bills we identified as of principal *Resource* interest, i.e. HB 861, promoting umbilical cord-blood banking from within the Department of Health & Hospitals (DHH), and HB 370, aimed at banning taxpayer funding of human cloning in Louisiana, were signed into law by Governor Bobby Jindal, as **Acts 163 and 486**, respectively. Although, together, these go a long way toward supporting legitimate (ethical, moral) stem-cell therapeutics and research, while hampering human cloning, we must keep in mind the **reality that the latter (Act 486) probably does nothing to stop the most egregious abomination made possible by cloning techniques, i.e. the manufacture of animal? human hybrids or chimeras**. Given the British Parliament's approval of such human? animal hybridization last May, and the doubtless more liberal next U.S. administration, we will have to revisit these issues – again.

Also, our last "Roundup" issue, included a copy of an article entitled, "ACOG, ABOG and Your Conscience," which discussed ACOG Formal Opinion # 385 (11/07), titled "The Limits of Conscientious Refusal in Reproductive Medicine." This "Opinion" sought to place severe limits on our rights as physicians to practice according to our consciences, seeking to "Warn Ob/Gyn doctors that their practice pattern can be considered "unethical" by ACOG standards if they do not either do abortions, or refer patients desiring an abortion to an abortion provider," and "[s]uggest[ing] that pro-life doctors should locate their office in proximity to an abortion provider, for the convenience of such patients." Subsequently in January 2008, the American Board of Ob/Gyn (ABOG) published revised standards for doctors seeking recertification. The revised standards are tied to ACOG "Ethics" compliance. Fortunately, this assault did not pass unnoticed, and the appended copy of a June 27 Press Release from the Christian Medical Association (forwarded by our Alabama sister organization, *Physicians for Life*), underlines that, at least on this issue, we have a friend in U.S. Health & Human Services Secretary, Michael O. Leavitt. It would be appropriate to voice our appreciation to Secretary Leavitt for his position! DHHS Comment line: (202) 205-5445.

Finally, we received an initial response from the IRS requiring additional information; having supplied it, we are again awaiting their "definitive ruling." We will let you know as soon as we learn of that ruling, inasmuch as it will have a major impact on our future activities. We sincerely hope that the summer has been treating you well!

W. "Al" Krotoski, M.D., etc., and Francis Rinaudo, Jr., D.D.S.

Forthcoming Meetings of Interest:

Catholic Medical Association (www.cathmed.org): CME 17.25 h (Johns Hopkins University).

The 77th Annual Educational Conference of the Catholic Medical Association will take place October 9-11, 2008 in Baltimore, Maryland. The Hyatt Regency Hotel at the Inner Harbor will be the host facility.

The theme for this year's conference is, "**Theology of the Body: Modern Challenges to Health, Conscience and Human Development.**" The conference will address issues of conscience formation and its difficulties, the raising of children, spiritual and emotional healing from abortion and addiction, accepting limitations on health and reproduction, and aging and sexuality issues faced by the senior community.

Information: <http://www.cathmed.org/calendarofevents/conference.htm>

Registration Form: http://www.cathmed.org/calendarofevents/2008_registration.htm

ACOG on Pre-term Births and Abortion

(Adaptation of communications from AAPLOG, as transmitted by Alabama Physicians for Life)

There has been a blanket denial of any significant long-term reproductive risks of induced abortion by the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ACOG). ACOG's exact wording, taken from an Amicus Brief to the U.S. Supreme Court is: "The evidence belies any serious long term health consequences of abortion for minors. Contrary to the claims of the State and its amici, there is simply no reliable evidence that abortions are harmful to minors' health. Extensive reviews have concluded that there are no documented negative psychological or medical sequelae to abortion among teen-aged women. Minors who obtain an abortion are not at greater risk of complications in future pregnancies, future medical problems, or future psychological problems."

Not surprisingly, the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG) disagrees sharply with this position, citing "evidence based medicine." As one example, the U.S. pre-term birth rate is over 12% and rising; however, in the Republic of Ireland, where induced abortion is not legal, the pre-term birth rate is under 6% - approximately what the US pre-term birth rate was before abortion became legal. Furthermore, among African-Americans, with an induced abortion rate for that group of about 17%, the pre-term birth rate is 3 times higher than the white population. Despite the

ACOG assertion, there is an abundance of excellent scientific literature from around the world substantiating the association of induced abortion and subsequent pre-term birth, but there is no literature from ACOG addressing the topic. Abortion is an "untouchable" topic for ACOG.

On June 16-17, 2008, the U.S. Surgeon General convened a conference to discuss, among other subjects, the association of induced abortion and pre-term birth. Unfortunately, according to an AAPLOG member present at the meeting, there was a concerted effort to avoid any abortion/pre-term birth discussion; the ACOG representative simply defensively reiterated that medical evidence is not there to support a conversation on any association – despite some 60 articles on the subject in the literature! If the Surgeon General would recognize an association, it would be very helpful for improving women's informed consent. Our professional members could help a positive outcome by requesting an honest and open discussion of the subject! Please contact:

Rear Admiral Steven K. Galson
Acting Surgeon General
Office of the Surgeon General
5600 Fishers Lane, Room 18-66
Rockville, MD 20857.
Phone: 301-443-4000. Fax: 301-443-3574

Other "Conscience" Actions to be taken:

1. Contact the White House comment line, and urge the Bush Administration to issue new regulations protecting conscience rights in health care soon: (202) 456-1414.
2. Contact your US Congressman and urge him/her to sign on to the letter being circulated by Reps. Dave Weldon (R-FL) and Lincoln Davis (D-TN) to support new regulations protecting conscience rights in health care.
3. Contact U.S. DHHS Secretary Mike Leavitt's blog (see Appendix)

LOUISIANA CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

Senator Mary Landrieu
(202) 224-5824. FAX: (202) 224-9735

Senator David Vitter
(202) 224-4623. FAX: (202) 228-5061

Congressman William Jefferson
(202) 225-6636. FAX: (202) 225-1988

Congressman Steve Scalise
(202) 225-3015. FAX: (202) 226-0386

Congressman Charlie Melancon
(202) 225-4031. FAX: (202) 226-3944

Congressman Jim McCrery
(202) 225-2777. FAX: (202) 225-8039

Congressman Rodney Alexander
(202) 225-8490. FAX: (202) 225-5639

Congressman Don Cazayoux
(202) 225-3901. FAX: (202) 225-7313

Congressman Charles W. Boustany, Jr., M.D.
(202) 225-2031. FAX: (202) 225-5724

40 Years After Humanae Vitae

Pope Paul VI issued the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (On Human Life) on July 25, 1968 at a time when many in the Church were exerting great pressure on the Vatican to moderate the Catholic Church's views on contraception. Even a majority of the Pope's own

Commission for the Study of Problems of Population, Family and Birthrate (known as the Birth Control Commission) favored a change. However, the Pope, "invoking the mandate entrusted to Us [the Pope] by Christ" courageously reiterated the constant teaching of

the Church and warned the world that the use of contraception would diminish reverence for women and God and the gift of a child from the marital act. Pornography, essentially the objectification of women for the satisfaction of sexual desires, is a billion dollar business, intimate partner violence is an epidemic and divorce is a frequent occurrence.

Although space will not allow reprinting *Humanae Vitae* in full, it is important to recall that the Pope made specific challenges to scientists and to doctors and nurses.

To Scientists

Our next appeal is to men of science. These can "considerably advance the welfare of marriage and the family and also peace of conscience, if by pooling their efforts they strive to elucidate more thoroughly the conditions favorable to a proper regulation of births." (28) It is supremely desirable, and this was also the mind of Pius XII, that medical science should by the study of natural rhythms succeed in determining a sufficiently secure basis for the chaste limitation of offspring. (29) In this way scientists, especially those who are Catholics, will by their research establish the truth of the Church's claim that "there can be no contradiction between two divine laws—that which governs the transmitting of life and that which governs the fostering of married love."

To Doctors and Nurses

Likewise we hold in the highest esteem those

encourage infidelity. We don't have to look far to see the fruits of the sexual revolution that seeks to remove doctors and members of the nursing profession who, in the exercise of their calling, endeavor to fulfill the demands of their Christian vocation before any merely human interest. Let them therefore continue constant in their resolution always to support those lines of action which accord with faith and with right reason. And let them strive to win agreement and support for these policies among their professional colleagues. Moreover, they should regard it as an essential part of their skill to make themselves fully proficient in this difficult field of medical knowledge. For then, when married couples ask for their advice, they may be in a position to give them right counsel and to point them in the proper direction. Married couples have a right to expect this much from them.

Unfortunately, the widespread but misguided dissent that followed immediately after *Humane Vitae* has tended to focus on the negative, that is, what the Catholic Church prohibits. However, one of the main focuses of Pope John Paul II was on what has become known as the "Theology of the Body," which beautifully articulates the way in which spouses are called to image on earth the life giving love of the communion of the Trinity.

? **Humanae Vitae on the Vatican website:**

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae_en.html

? **Theology of the Body resources:**

http://www.theologyofthebody.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=6&Itemid=50

Pope Paul VI Institute Answers the Call of *Humanae Vitae*

Responding to the challenge in *Humanae Vitae*, Dr. Thomas Hilgers founded the Pope Paul VI Institute in Omaha, Nebraska and has spent over 30 years in research and development of the Creighton Model FertilityCare System. This is a unique method of fertility awareness that can be used for family planning as well as for facilitating the treatment of infertility and other gynecologic problems.

Physicians who have been trained in the medical application of this method, NaproTechnology, can use the information from a woman's fertility charting to target diagnostic procedures, such as hormone levels, to the correct phase of the menstrual cycle. Additionally, NaproTechnology allows therapy to be used cooperatively with the woman's cycle in a way that avoids the unnecessary suppression of a woman's fertility. The FertilityCare system and NaproTechnology can be used to treat infertility, repetitive miscarriage, recurrent ovarian cysts,

hormonal abnormalities, premenstrual syndrome and abnormal bleeding. And unlike in-vitro fertilization and birth control pills, NaproTechnology is morally acceptable to people of all faiths, respects the dignity of women and the sacrament of marriage, and the integrity of the human person.

The FertilityCare system is taught one-on-one to women or couples by professionally trained FertilityCare Practitioners. It can be used for family planning with a typical use effectiveness of 97%, which is comparable to any other drug or device. And it is natural and free of the serious side effects of birth control pills. And just like all the methods of natural family planning, it is in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding sexuality and marriage. Couples initially attend an introductory session that provides an overview of the method. If they decide to pursue it further, they are given charting materials with which to monitor their cycle in anticipation of the first

follow-up appointment with the FertilityCare Practitioner. Over the next several months there will be about 8 follow-ups. Couples are charged \$40 for the introductory session. If they choose to then learn the method they are charged \$300 for materials and the remaining 8 sessions. In the Baton Rouge area, **introductory sessions are being held every first Sunday at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church in the parish activity center.** We are fortunate to have two new FertilityCare Practitioners in training, Christie Fletcher and Janet Hoover. Interested people can contact them at 225-242-0150.

Hippocratic Resource members are encouraged to consider incorporating this service into their practice. It is especially appropriate for obstetrician/gynecologists, family physicians and internists to become medical consultants in this method. Nurses and other medical providers are excellent candidates, although you do not have to have a medical background to be a FertilityCare practitioner. Information on the certification process for medical consultants and practitioners can be found at www.popepaulvi.org.

(Rob Chasuk, M.D. offers NaproTechnology services at the Family Health Center, 3801 North Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Tel: (225) 381-6620).

Regarding HHS Secretary Leavitt's intent to promulgate a rule supporting a physician's conscience, an extract of a Reuters article appeared in The Advocate, Baton Rouge, LA in the August 8, 2008 issue. Access to the original, Reuters article appears below:

HHS chief denies new rule to attack contraception

Fri Aug 8, 2008 5:25am EDT

By Maggie Fox, Health and Science Editor

See

(<http://www.reuters.com/article/healthNews/idUSN0734863820080808?feedType=RSS&feedName=healthNews>)

Our rights of conscience are being attacked by pro-abortion-choice organizations, including, as has been pointed out in this and our last Roundup issue, ACOG and ABOG, as well as legislators supported by such groups. The article above underlines the need for medical professionals to encourage Secretary Leavitt to stand fast on the legal right of medical practitioners to practice according to their consciences, and patients to be able to choose a doctor who has beliefs like his or hers.

[For concrete action, by contacting U.S. D/H.H.S. Secretary Michael Leavitt on his blog, also see Appendix]

– W. A. Krotoski, M.D.

Robert Chasuk, M.D.
Patti Chasuk
Editors

(Please also see over)

APPENDIX

CMA Physicians Laud HHS Secretary Leavitt for Protecting Physicians and Patients on Abortion and Conscience Issue

Washington--June 27, 2008--The Christian Medical Association (CMA, www.cmda.org). The nation's largest faith-based organization of physicians, today lauded U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Michael O. Leavitt for encouraging the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ABOG) to clearly publish assurances that it will not decertify or otherwise penalize physicians who do not perform or refer for abortions.

CMA CEO David Stevens said, "Secretary Leavitt is serving America's physicians and patients well by prodding ABOG to provide assurances that it will uphold fundamental principles of conscience protections in healthcare. Protecting the right for physicians to abide by longstanding ethical codes such as the Hippocratic Oath is one of the best ways to protect patients—by insuring that their physicians follow time-tested objective standards and not ideological whims or politically motivated pressures."

Secretary Leavitt's letter addresses ABOG's written guidance, published last December, that links its physician certification procedures with the ethics positions of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Those ACOG positions include a controversial official position issued in November that called upon conscience-objecting obstetricians to refer patients for abortions—an act which many such physicians consider unethical.

Dr. Stevens noted, "As Secretary Leavitt has pointed out, forcing physicians to refer for abortions not only violates ethical standards; it may also violate federal laws such as the Weldon amendment, which prohibits discrimination in certain cases from forcing physicians and institutions to 'provide, pay for, provide coverage of, or refer for abortions.'"

Stevens said, "An informal survey of our membership revealed that over 41 percent have been 'pressured to compromise Biblical or ethical convictions.' Over 46 percent 'know of a colleague in medicine who has experienced' such pressure. We have been working hard to raise awareness of and counter the attack on conscience rights in healthcare—not just to protect our members and their patients, but also to protect physicians and patients of conscience nationwide."

Dr. Gene Rudd, an obstetrician and CMA Senior Vice President, said, "It's one thing for ACOG to allow for differences of opinion on abortion, and quite another to require its members to submit to the ACOG leadership's decidedly partisan position on abortion." Dr. Rudd canceled his ACOG membership as a result of the organization's abortion referral mandate.

Leavitt's letter of June 20 to ABOG notes, "Amending current and future ABOG Bulletins to clarify specifically which ACOG rules and principles the Bulletin refers to would reduce potential future confusion over this issue. So too would amending the Bulletin, or another appropriate ABOG document, to reflect your statement that physicians' refusal to perform or refer for services that violate their ethical or moral standards is not a consideration in certification."

On March 14, Secretary Leavitt sent a letter to the Board that noted, "It appears that the interaction of the [ABOG Bulletin for 2008 Maintenance of Certification] with the ACOG ethics report would force physicians to violate their conscience by referring patients for abortions or taking other objectionable actions, or risk losing their board certification."

To schedule an interview, please contact Margie Shealy at (423) 844-1047 or by e-mail: margie.shealy@cmda.org. The Christian Medical Association is equipped with Ku Band Digital Uplink satellite and ISDN lines.

Links:

Christian Medical Association (CMA) - <http://www.cmda.org>

ACOG Committee Opinion #385 - http://www.acog.org/from_home/publications/ethics/co385.pdf

HHS News Release: HHS Secretary Calls on Certification Group to Protect Conscience Rights –

<http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2008pres/03/20080314a.html>

Dear Colleague!

With apologies for this second e-mail in two days, but this of great importance for us all! I am taking the liberty of forwarding the information below from the Christian Medical & Dental Associations' Executive officer, David Stevens, M.D., with the hope that you will be able to respond to his request. It doesn't matter if you are obgyn, FP, Surg, ER doc, or any other subspecialty, or nurse, or dentist, or other medical professional: IT IS TIME TO BE HEARD.

Many thanks for your time and attention!

W. "Al" Krotoski, M.D., etc., President, *The Hippocratic Resource*

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE U.S. HHS SECRETARY, MICHAEL LEAVITT, HEAR FROM YOU. HE HAS ASKED TO HEAR FROM YOU. DETAILS ARE EXPLAINED IN THIS CMDA LETTER FROM DR. DAVID STEVENS.

You will find Sec. Leavitt's blog at:

http://secretaryblog.hhs.gov/my_weblog/2008/08/physician-con-1.html. Go to the blog, read his comments to you, then scroll to the bottom (there are a LOT of comments), and there you can enter your own.

Below is Dr Stevens further explanatory letter to CMDA members, germane to all others as well:

Dear CMDA Member,

Urgent action item: Go to the HHS Secretary's blog to read comments and scroll to the bottom to post your comment on draft federal regulations protecting our conscience rights.

We have a rare and urgent opportunity to push forward federal regulations protecting our rights to make professional decisions based on our moral convictions and ethical codes.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt has invited comments on his web page "blog"-a short article explaining why the Department is pursuing regulations on conscience rights in healthcare. These regulations would put teeth into 35 years of law to protect our right of conscience in healthcare.

I just did my first blog comment post, and it is very important for you to post a comment now, too. Here's why:

Pro-abortion groups have flooded his blog with their negative comments. These groups are committed to pressuring hospitals and professionals to provide and refer to abortion.

If we lose this battle, it can pave the way for forcing physicians to participate in or refer for abortions, physician-assisted suicide, prisoner executions or a host of other controversial practices.

The Secretary needs our evidence of support on these regulations in order to fight back against the pressure to not publish them. This is the best opportunity we have right now to slow or halt the aggressive assaults many of our members have faced on this First Amendment issue.

Your blog comment doesn't have to be long. You can respond to someone else's comments but stay on focus.

Pro-abortion groups are trying to make this argument about whether some types of contraception cause abortion. The regulations would simply respect varying viewpoints on this issue. We need to keep the focus on conscience and First Amendment rights. When physicians adhere to long-standing ethical codes, patients are protected.

The most powerful comment you can make is to tell a true story in which healthcare professionals have been pressured or discriminated against in training or practice. To read stories of discrimination that others have already submitted, as well as for more ideas and facts, go to www.cmda.org > Issues & Ethics > Healthcare > Conscience Rights.

If regulations are published, we can make formal comments at that time - but first we have to provide the evidence to get the regulations published. It will only take a few minutes, but you can make a big difference. Click here to read comments and scroll to the bottom to add your post.

Thanks for your time.

David Stevens, M.D., M.A. (Ethics)
Chief Executive Officer
Christian Medical & Dental Associations