

Cardinal-Designate O'Brien Condemns Obama Administration Decision Disregarding Conscience Protections for Religious Employers and Individuals, Echoes Statement of U.S. Bishops

Health and Human Services Edict Requires Virtually All Health Plans Include Sterilization, Abortifacients and Contraception

From Rome earlier today, Cardinal-designate Edwin F. O'Brien, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, condemned the Obama administration's decision to leave unchanged a Health and Human Services mandate that virtually all health plans provide for sterilization, abortifacients and contraception.

"Within 24 hours of one of the most significant statements on religious freedom of Pope Benedict XVI's pontificate, President Obama's administration issued this shocking and disturbing decision, effectively forcing individuals and religious organizations to surrender their beliefs—rooted in long-held Judeo-Christian tradition and practice—for the sake of political and financial expediency," the Cardinal-designate said.

"I echo the statement of Cardinal-designate Timothy Dolan on behalf of our Nation's Catholic bishops and urge all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to pray for our elected officials and to work to reform this unjust regulation. Catholics and many others must take a stand on this fundamental issue."

Jan. 20 Statement of U.S. Bishops

Jan. 19 Statement of Pope Benedict XVI