



WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

**For Immediate Release
January 15, 2009**

CATHOLIC CONFERENCE TO HOSPITALS: PROVIDE AID, NOT ABORTION

The Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the public policy voice of Wisconsin's bishops, has written the head executives of three Madison health care agencies to express its strong opposition to the reported plan to perform abortions at the Madison Surgery Center.

"Institutions that are committed to healing and saving human lives do not advance that mission by performing induced abortions," wrote Barbara Sella, WCC Associate Director for Respect Life and Social Concerns.

Sella's letter, directed to the University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics (UWHC), the UW Medical Foundation, and Meriter Hospital, made a special mention of the involvement of the university hospital system in the proposed clinic.

"While the WCC can never support the expansion of abortion anywhere in Wisconsin, what is particularly distressing is that this proposed expansion involves the UWHC. The UWHC is unlike any other health care system in Wisconsin," Sella wrote. "Even if tax dollars are not involved, as the state's leading medical research and teaching institution, the UWHC is both a symbol and a reflection of who we are as a people."

Sella argued that such direct involvement in abortion runs contrary to Wisconsin's history of providing aid to vulnerable human beings.

"Induced abortion, even if legal, denies help to the unborn child. That is not what the Wisconsin Idea is about," Sella argued. "Rather than taking human lives, the tradition of our state and the mission of the UWHC are best served by exclusively healing and saving lives."

In her letter, Sella called attention to other Madison organizations such as Catholic Charities, Pregnancy Helpline, Care Net, and Safe Place for Newborns. She suggested cooperation with such organizations in their efforts would better serve pregnant women and children.

"We encourage all individuals and institutions committed to advancing the health and well being of women and children to collaborate with these and similar organizations. Working together, let us give every human being the opportunity to thrive."

Sella also urged concerned citizens to write to the facilities' leadership urging them to drop the project or sign petitions to that effect.

-30-

Contact: Barbara Sella at 608-257-0004