

## Focus Action Update™ Transcript

July 17, 2009

**Stuart Shepart, host:** While president Obama has said repeatedly he wants to reduce the number of abortions, his healthcare plan is proposing lots of new ways to use your money to pay for abortions. This is the Focus Action Update. Hi, I'm Stuart Shepard along with Carrie Gordon Earll, our senior director of issues analysis. Hi Carrie.

**Carrie Earll, guest:** Hi Stuart.

**Stuart:** The government healthcare plan is being debated in Congress right now. It's massive in scope, there've been a lot of talk about the expense of it and the size of it, but it also contains some provisions that pro-lifers should really be keeping an eye on.

**Carrie:** Well, they should, and this is kind of a sleeper issue. You hear a little bit about it, you may have some concerns, but I would venture to say many if not most of our viewers are not aware of the direct connection of these healthcare reform measures to abortion and to rights of conscience measures for healthcare providers.

**Stuart:** Describe some of what's in there.

**Carrie:** Well, it's interesting because this is really poised to be one of the biggest expansions, if not the biggest expansion of abortion since 1973 and *Roe v. Wade*. It's primed to set the pro-life movement back decades if we do not pay attention to this and defeat it. Now, let me give you an example here. Three of the major pro-life policy threats that we've been talking to our friends and viewers about are kind of an umbrella under these healthcare provisions. What you have is the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), we've talked about FOCA which would enshrine abortion in every nook and cranny of federal and state law and repeal pro-life laws at the state and federal level. We've talked about the pro-life riders, the funding, the spending restrictions like the Hyde amendment that prevents your tax dollars from being used for abortion. We've talked about that. The third thing we've talked about is rights of conscience for healthcare providers so they don't have to commit abortions and violate their conscience or their moral integrity. All three of these key issues are found within this healthcare. And what this really is, these healthcare reform measures, is a backdoor attempt to pass FOCA into law, at least by piecemeal, to bypass these pro-life spending restrictions like the Hyde amendment and to force doctors to do abortions. I think most Americans are not aware that's what's in this healthcare reform.

**Stuart:** And it's going to affect businesses, individuals, healthcare workers. In the past, Congress has usually included some kind of protections for healthcare workers. We're talking doctors, pharmacists, nurses, hospitals in general if they're religiously based, Catholic hospitals, Baptist hospitals, Jewish hospitals. But that's not in it this time.

**Carrie:** No it's not and in fact attempts that have been made in committee to exclude abortion and include the rights of conscience protections have been defeated by Democrats. What you have right now is something that would require taxpayers to pay for this, employers to cover it in their healthcare coverage and doctors to do abortions. When we're talking 15 to 20 percent of the hospitals in this nation are Catholic alone, that doesn't include the other denomination and religious hospitals, some of those are going to close their doors if they're forced to do abortion. Now, if you get these healthcare reform bills online and some people may do that – 800,000 pages – but if you want to read it, you could do a word search and not find abortion. Abortion is not specifically excluded. We know from past experience with Congress, when it's not specifically excluded, it's included. And included as broadly as possible. So what you have here is the federal government poised to make abortion a healthcare right, and once that happens, every law that's on the books, state or federal, that restricts or limits abortion is going to be suspect, it's going to be in jeopardy. We're talking parental involvement, informed consent, late-term abortion bans, and it's possible this healthcare reform could overturn that. I think, again, people don't realize how directly affected abortion will be. People don't realize how directly affected you're going to be, Stuart Shepard, because this plan, as it is, requires your employer to have a healthcare plan that includes what they call "minimum standards." Essential elements of these healthcare benefits and again, if abortion is not excluded, it is included.

**Stuart:** And you just hit a key point. I want to make sure people absorb that. Because you might be thinking, "Well, I have an employee healthcare plan. I'm not on government healthcare, therefore, I'm not going to be affected by this." No, this covers literally every healthcare package or else the employer will be punished somehow if they don't meet those standards.

**Carrie:** As these proposals sit at this time, that's correct. It doesn't matter whether you're paying for this through your premiums through your healthcare through your employer or whether all of us are paying with our tax dollars with the public option, abortion will be covered, it will be mandated and your tax dollars will be used. Who's going to decide what the essential elements are? Well, it's going to be Secretary of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, who we've talked about on this program, who's very pro-abortion. So you have the abortion industry that has been up front in saying we want abortion and comprehensive reproductive rights and all those phrases to be part of the healthcare reform. They're getting what they want, they're not going to settle for less.

**Stuart:** One of the definitions of the bill as it stands now that caught our eye is the designation of "essential community healthcare providers." Tell us what that's about and what group is in line to get some of that cash.

**Carrie:** Well, Stuart, your healthcare package, through your employer, not only will have to include abortion, but it will require your healthcare provider's company, whoever you do your healthcare through, to contract with people in the community that are going to provide these services. Now, for the purposes of our conversation, that means the

abortion industry. That, if you have abortion as a covered essential benefit in federally mandated healthcare, who's going to do the abortions? Planned Parenthood is bragging on their Web site already that they are an "essential provider," which means your employer's healthcare plan must contract with Planned Parenthood or another abortionist company to have abortions available and I think people don't realize that is how deep and how wide this is going to go.

**Stuart:** Not long ago, I saw a minivan and on the back were a bunch of stickers that indicated they were pro-life. They also had paid extra for the "Respect Life" license plate. And that's fine, but also on the back of the van was a "Yes we did" sticker with a picture of Obama and Biden. There're a lot of pro-lifers who were misled by the campaign speeches leading up to this and now, I think, they're starting to realize that this is a pro-abortion administration, working with a pro-abortion Congress. What do they do now?

**Carrie:** Well, they need to take a close look at what's going on. Again, the Obama campaign was a text book example of how to use media, how to use rhetoric, how to be really smooth and successful. A lot of people with that hope and excitement got behind it. But now they're seeing the actual fruit of what the Obama administration has brought. Everything that we've talked about, whether it's FOCA, whether it's the pro-life spending limits that we're trying to protect like the Hyde amendment, the protection for religious healthcare providers or nonreligious healthcare providers for that matter, that's all from the Obama administration. They walked in to Congress, gave them a list of what they wanted, and Congress is kowtowing and implementing it. People need to realize, when we talk about implementing FOCA, removing the Hyde amendment and not protecting our religious healthcare workers, that is going to have a major impact on your ability to get healthcare, and that is what the Obama administration is bringing.

**Stuart:** So, let's summarize this whole thing. It deals with government funding for abortion, it deals with employee healthcare plans, that they'll be forced to include abortion coverage – which means your premiums, the part that you pay in to... Because most people if they have an employee healthcare plan, your employer pays part of it, but you also pay part of it. In effect, it's part of your package, you're paying for all of it in the end. But that money will go toward paying for abortions under that insurance plan as well. What else should people think about as they look at the breadth and scope of this? Where else is that money going to go?

**Carrie:** Well, that's what is scary about this. I think the pro-life leaders that looked at these bills have been able to tease out some of the details we've talked about today but I don't think it's too much to say that if this healthcare reform package passes as it is, we will find abortion in every nook and cranny and crevice of the culture and the pro-life movement will cease to exist as it does today. We will not be able to operate in the same way because you will not have restrictions on federal funding. The Hyde amendment, that's been in place since 1976, is being bypassed by this, it will not affect this healthcare reform even though it's still on the books, because it's a different funding mechanism. So, everything that we've had in place for 30 years to limit abortions, and

here's President Obama meeting with the Pope saying he wants to reduce abortions, yet his own healthcare plan will increase it. Availability equals access equals use. If you have more funding for abortion, you have more abortion accessibility, you will have more abortion. We've seen that through the years.

**Stuart:** So we either stop this here, or it's going to be abortion everywhere and paid for by our cash.

**Carrie:** And it will be virtually impossible to pull back. Once this is implemented, government programs are not easily reversed. It would take a virtual revolution to do that, so the time to do this is now. I'm cautiously optimistic. There have been some establishment media voices like *Time* magazine, MSNBC that have said for the Obama administration to put abortion in its healthcare, that's not smart, that's really going to pick a fight, not only with the pro-life community, but with Americans. Polls show Americans do not want their tax dollars used to fund abortion and they want healthcare providers to have the option of saying no without penalty or discrimination. So, they're really going down the path. I think we can turn this around, but we need some grassroots heat going to Washington. So let members of Congress know you do not want abortion included, but you do want those healthcare workers protected.

**Stuart:** Now let's talk about this, who should they call? What's the easiest way for them to make that contact?

**Carrie:** Well this thing's on the fast track and when you look at the polling that you see, the support for this is dropping, you know why it is on the fast track. They're trying to get it out quick. So you need to contact your members of Congress. Ask them to exclude abortion, specifically say no abortion in this, and include those healthcare providers, make sure they're protected.

**Stuart:** And if you would like to contact your representative in Congress you can go through our [Action Center](#). If you go to the CitizenLink.com homepage, you can look for the link to "Action Center" at the top and find the action item in there. It's a very simple process, it only takes a few minutes. You can either make a phone call or send an e-mail to your representative and ask them to exclude abortion from any healthcare plan that may be passed by Congress. Carrie, thank you for sharing today.

**Carrie:** You're welcome.

**Stuart:** Alright and thank you for watching. We do appreciate hearing from you, we love to hear your questions and your comments. We read everyone that comes in. You may write us at [CitizenLink@family.org](mailto:CitizenLink@family.org). That's [CitizenLink@family.org](mailto:CitizenLink@family.org). Remember, stand tall and be heard.