

Conscience rights protect patients and health care professionals

Scope

- “One in eight hospitals in the U.S. is affiliated with the Catholic Church; they employ more than 750,000 people and handle 16% of hospital admissions.”ⁱ
- "Each year, one in six patients in the U.S. is cared for in a Catholic hospital."ⁱⁱ
- Add to these numbers:
 - Adventist hospitals
 - Faith-based clinics in poor communities across U.S.
 - Individual faith-based healthcare professionals in private practice or institutions

Polling

the polling company™ inc. | WomanTrend
Kellyanne Conway, President & CEO

(Details: <http://www.freedom2care.org/learn/page/surveys>)

1. April 2009 - The Polling Company, Inc.

Nationwide telephone survey of 800 American adults (39% Democrat • 33% Republican • 22% Independent)



- **88%** of American adults surveyed said it is either “very” or “somewhat” important to them that they **share a similar set of morals as their doctors, nurses, and other healthcare providers.**

- **87%** of American adults surveyed believed it is important to “make sure that healthcare professionals in America are **not forced to participate** in procedures and practices to which they have **moral objections.**”

- Likelihood of voting for current Member of Congress who supported eliminating the (2008) conscience rule:

- 25% more likely to vote for Member who supported eliminating rule
- **54% less likely to vote for Member who supported eliminating rule**

- "In 2004 the Hyde-Weldon Amendment was passed. It ruled that taxpayer funds must not be used by governments and government-funded programs to discriminate against hospitals, health insurance plans, and healthcare professionals who decline to participate in abortions. Do you support or oppose this law?"

- **58% support Hyde-Weldon Amendment**
- 31% oppose Hyde-Weldon Amendment

2. The Polling Company, Inc. - online survey of 2,865 faith-based professionals

- **Over nine of ten (91%)** faith-based physicians agreed, "I would **rather stop practicing medicine** altogether than be forced to violate my conscience."

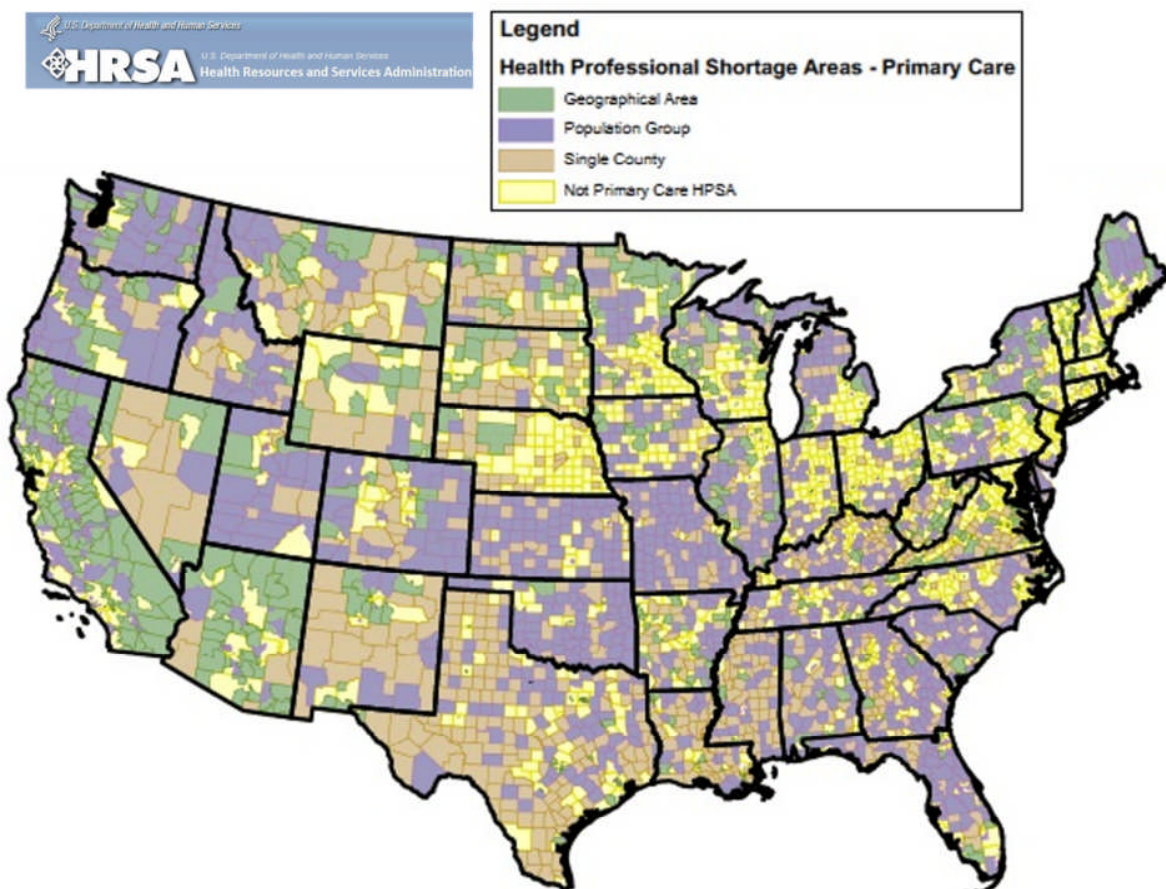


- **32%** of faith-based healthcare professionals report having "been **pressured to refer a patient** for a procedure to which [they] had moral, ethical, or religious objections."

- **20%** of faith-based **medical students** say they are "**not pursuing a career in Obstetrics or Gynecology**" because of perceived discrimination and coercion in that field.

Danger

1. Faith-based professionals and institutions often purposely locate in **medically underserved areas** and serve patients in medically underserved populations. Faith-based health care is the *only* option for many patients nationwide.



View your state or district: <http://datawarehouse.hrsa.gov/hpsadetail.aspx>

2. **Critical shortages** now or predicted in near future: primary care physicians, Ob-Gyn, nurses.

The New York Times

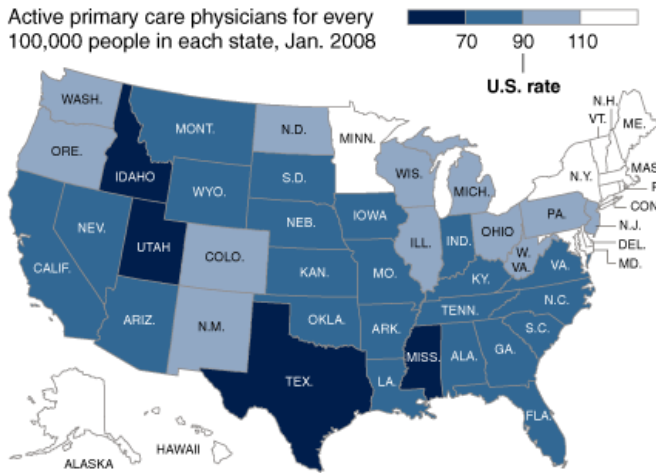
Shortage of Doctors an Obstacle to Obama Goals

The New York Times

April 27, 2009

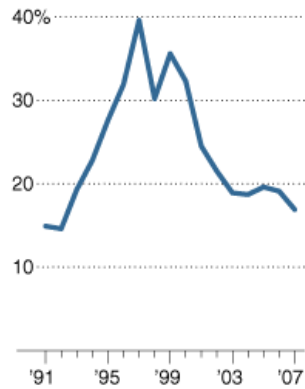
Primary Care Providers in Short Supply

Active primary care physicians for every 100,000 people in each state, Jan. 2008



Source: Association of American Medical Colleges

Percentage of medical school graduates who said they intended to go into primary health care




3. Removing conscience protections can force faith-based health care professionals and institutions out of medicine and trigger massive loss of health care access for millions of patients.

Illustrations



- Nov. 2007: Pro-abortion **ACOG** issues official "ethics" position:
 - Physicians must either perform or refer for abortions and other objectionable procedures.
 - Physicians may not exercise their right of conscience if that might "constitute an imposition of religious or moral beliefs on patients."
 - ACOG ethics linked to (ABOG) physician board certification.

- Discrimination against faith-based institutions:
 - Alliance of Catholic Health Care (Calif.): “The urgent need for enhanced federal protection is underscored by threats that include ongoing efforts by public officials in California to force Catholic and other health care providers to perform or pay for abortions. These include a lawsuit by the California attorney general (*Lockyer v. United States of America*) to have a federal conscience-rights law declared unconstitutional, and proposals (in 2008 & 2010) by the California Department of Managed Health Care to compel Catholic and other health care employers to **cover abortions** in their health insurance plans.”ⁱⁱⁱ

- Discrimination against individual physicians, residents and medical students:
 - Dr. "H": "I entered Ob/Gyn residency at a university hospital. Within a month, I left due to pressure from faculty and upper residents, solely due to conscientious objection. I chose not to participate in tubal ligation and contraceptive prescription. I ... was **blackballed from education**. The program director basically stated that I could do these procedures, or leave."
 - Dr. Rebecca Lavy: (On faculty at teaching hospital in Dallas.) "In certain cases,
 -  faculty were required to prescribe post-coital use of oral contraceptives. I refused to prescribe it and was told, 'This may be an employment issue.' The obvious, not-so-subtle implication was that **I would be fired if I refused**. I didn't agree with simply calling someone else in (one of the residents) to prescribe the medication. If prescribing them is ethically wrong, asking someone else to do it for me is equally wrong."
 - Trevor Kitchens: "I am a first-year medical student in the beginning stages of deciding which specialty I would like to pursue. I am currently very interested in Ob-Gyn, but I am afraid of the relationship between this field and abortion. I am 100% against abortion, and there is no way I would perform one. My fear is that **taking this stand would cost me my residence position**. Now, if that is what it comes down to, I will be glad to take the stand for Jesus Christ and give up my position. However, I would really like to be able to avoid this situation and complete my residence so that I could go on and serve the Lord in that field."

More stories: http://www.freedom2care.org/learn/personal_stories.asp

ⁱ “Health-Care Overhaul Creates Dilemma for Some Catholics,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 5, 2009.

ⁱⁱ “Catholic Health Care in the U.S.” - January 2011 report.

<http://www.chausa.org/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147489259>

ⁱⁱⁱ “Without fear or intimidation,” *California Catholic Daily*, April 2, 2009

<http://calcatholic.com/news/newsArticlePrintable.aspx?id=367de629-7851-4716-92ae-f0b3a8daa853>