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Press Release

September 27, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Plan B and Catholic Hospitals

The Catholic Bishops of Connecticut, joined by the leaders of the Catholic hospitals in the State, issue the following statement regarding the administration of Plan B in Catholic hospitals to victims of rape:

The four Catholic hospitals in the State of Connecticut remain committed to providing competent and compassionate care to victims of rape. In accordance with Catholic moral teaching, these hospitals provide emergency contraception after appropriate testing. Under the existing hospital protocols, this includes a pregnancy test and an ovulation test. Catholic moral teaching is adamantly opposed to abortion but not to emergency contraception for victims of rape.

This past spring the Governor signed into a law “An Act Concerning Compassionate Care for Victims of Sexual Assault,” passed by the State Legislature. It does not allow medical professionals to take into account the results of the ovulation test. The Bishops and other Catholic health care leaders believe that this law is seriously flawed, but not sufficiently to bar compliance with it at the present time. We continue to believe this law should be changed.

Nonetheless to administer Plan B pills in Catholic hospitals to victims of rape, a pregnancy test to determine that the woman has not conceived is sufficient. An ovulation test will not be required. The administration of Plan B pills in this instance cannot be judged to be the commission of an abortion because of such doubt about how Plan B pills and similar drugs work and because of the current impossibility of knowing from the ovulation test whether a new life is present. To administer Plan B pills without an ovulation test is not an intrinsically evil act.

Since the teaching authority of the Church has not definitively resolved this matter and since there is serious doubt about how Plan B pills work, the Catholic Bishops of Connecticut have stated that Catholic hospitals in the State may follow protocols that do not require an ovulation test in the treatment of victims of rape. A pregnancy test approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration suffices. If it becomes clear that Plan B pills would lead to an early chemical abortion in some instances, this matter would have to be reopened.

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