

New Jersey Catholic Conference

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Statement of the New Jersey Catholic Conference on Human Stem Cell Research

The New Jersey Catholic Conference opposes State general obligation bonds for the purpose of financing the costs of embryonic stem cell research or funding research facilities for the conduct of embryonic stem cell research.

In testimony over the years, the New Jersey Catholic Conference has consistently opposed human embryonic stem cell research legislation on the basis that the creation and destruction of human embryonic stem cells violate the sanctity of human life.

A fundamental tenet of Catholic social teaching is that each human life is sacred. Scripture calls us to have a special concern for the vulnerable whether they are young, old, disabled, poor, hungry, homeless, physically ill, mentally ill or unborn.

The sanctity of human life, which begins at conception, is the gift of a loving God. We support the right to life of unborn children because they are fully human. We oppose experimentation on, and utilization of, unborn children, their tissues, and embryonic stem cells.

However, we do advocate the use of adult (non-embryonic) stem cells that have been shown to offer promise in the fight to eradicate heartbreaking diseases that are debilitating and life-threatening. Adult (non-embryonic) stem cells come from adult tissue, placentas, or umbilical cord blood and can be retrieved without harming the donor. Adult (non-embryonic) stem cells have helped thousands of patients, and hold much promise for the future.

The Catholic Conference has been pleased to have worked with Assemblymen Neil Cohen and Louis Greenwald in an effort to encourage umbilical cord and placental blood donation.

All New Jersey Catholic Hospitals, hundreds of Catholic parishes, the Catholic Healthcare Partnership of New Jersey and all of New Jersey's Catholic Bishops have endorsed this initiative and are working with the two public umbilical blood banks in New Jersey to actively support adult stem cell research.

*Representing the Archdiocese of Newark, Diocese of Camden, Diocese of Metuchen,
Diocese of Paterson, Diocese of Trenton, Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic and
Our Lady of Deliverance Syriac Catholic Diocese*