



**A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey on
Charity Care Funding**

May 14, 2008

Catholic hospitals have served the people of New Jersey for more than 150 years. In the 19th Century, dedicated and committed religious men and women came to New Jersey and established some of the first hospitals in our state. Today, Catholic hospitals continue because of the commitment and dedication of thousands of physicians, nurses, other health care professionals, and staff who provide care to more than 2,500,000 individuals each year at thirteen hospitals.

Recognizing the many challenges of health care delivery today, the Catholic Bishops of New Jersey desire to continue our Catholic mission of providing first-rate service and quality care in our hospitals that welcome patients, especially the poor and vulnerable, without regard to race, religion, or social status.

As New Jersey's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget is debated, we call for health care access for the poor and vulnerable to be a priority that is not sacrificed. As the State looks at the proposal to cut \$143 million from the Charity Care program and \$10 million from graduate medical education, we are concerned that the poor and vulnerable will be harmed as programs are curtailed, staff is reduced, and some hospitals are forced to close. *The New Jersey Commission on Rationalizing Health Care Resources*' was correct in concluding that many New Jersey hospitals are in "poor financial health" because of under funding by Medicaid and Charity Care. This under funding is a threat to the future of many of our Catholic hospitals.

In 2006 Catholic hospitals provided nearly 20% of the State's documented Charity Care. The cost of this care was over \$241,921,000. The proposed FY 2009 Budget would reimburse approximately \$143,569,000 towards Charity Care or more than \$98 million less than costs. Two Catholic hospitals provided over \$16.7 million in Charity Care in 2006 and received no reimbursement at all for the services they provided.

In summary, we support the efforts that are being proposed to bring universal health care access to New Jersey and we are proud to partner with the State in providing access to health care especially for the poor and vulnerable. At the same time, we ask that the funds for Charity Care that would be affected by proposed cuts be restored so that this partnership may continue.

Most Reverend John J. Myers
Archbishop of Newark

Most Reverend William C. Skurla
Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Passaic

Most Reverend Joseph A. Galante
Bishop of Camden

Most Reverend Joseph Younan
Bishop of Our Lady of Deliverance Diocese

Most Reverend Paul G. Bootkoski
Bishop of Metuchen

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha
Auxiliary Bishop of Newark

Most Reverend Arthur J. Serratelli
Bishop of Paterson

Most Reverend Thomas A. Donato
Auxiliary Bishop of Newark

Most Reverend John M. Smith
Bishop of Trenton

Most Reverend John W. Flesey
Auxiliary Bishop of Newark

*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*