

ACLU'S WAR ON CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE CONTINUES

The ACLU continues its war on Catholic health care, this time in Peoria, Illinois.

The ACLU objects to the fact that federally funded Heartland Health Services leases two of its four clinics from OSF Saint Francis Medical Center. The lease agreement requires staff at those two clinics to comply with the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services—meaning, complains the ACLU, that patients cannot get prescription contraceptives at those clinics.

Heartland's director of marketing, however, points out that prescription contraceptives are available at its other two clinics in the city, and that it offers free bus passes and taxi vouchers for patients who might have transportation issues. So once again, the issue for the ACLU is not access to contraception. Their real goal is to bring the Catholic Church to heel—forcing it to either provide “services” that contravene its moral teachings, or else to get out of health care ministry. This is just the latest front in the ACLU's ongoing assault on the religious freedom of Catholic health care institutions.

As usual, the real victims would be the people who rely on those institutions: in this case, Peoria's low-income adults and children, minorities, uninsured, medically indigent, and homeless who are the focus of Heartland's services. They are the people who would suffer if the ACLU succeeds in driving a wedge between Heartland Health Services and OSF Saint Francis Medical Center.

But to the ACLU, they are just acceptable collateral damage in its ideological war against the Catholic Church.