

# HHS MANDATE REVISIONS FAIL TO SATISFY

Recently, the Obama administration announced new revisions to its HHS mandate that requires Catholic institutions to pay for abortion-inducing drugs as part of their health plans. The federal government revealed that it considers these new rules a “work around” for groups that object to providing coverage for sterilization, contraception and abortifacients. The new revisions allow Catholic non-profits to distance themselves from the objectionable services, but they still fail to satisfy.

Archbishop Joseph Kurtz, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), is likewise unsatisfied by the new rules. The archbishop notes that these new revisions still do not allow those who have “sincerely held religious objections to the mandate” to opt out. Furthermore, he noted that under the new regulations the “religious employer” exemption will not be broadened. The existing “accommodation” would only be modified. The Catholic League continues to support the USCCB’s request for a broad exemption for all religious employers.

The second problem with the updated requirements is even more serious. The federal government still thinks it can reinterpret what constitutes a Catholic entity. The Obama administration continues to enforce the HHS mandate under the premise that a Catholic organization is not a Catholic organization in terms of exemptions if it hires and serves people who are not Catholic. That is the heart of the problem.