

# NOMINEE TO HEAD FDA DEEPLY FLAWED

Catholic League president Bill Donohue responds to news that President Obama will nominate Margaret A. Hamburg as the director of the Food and Drug Administration:

*"In 1994, I received a letter from Dr. Hamburg, New York City's Health Commissioner, complaining about ads the Catholic League had placed in New York City subways. The ads read, 'Want to Know a Dirty Little Secret? Condoms Don't Save Lives. But Restraint Does. Only Fools Think Condoms Are Foolproof. Remember, Better Safe Than Sorry.'*

"Hamburg admitted that abstinence was the best way to stop HIV infection, but she nonetheless labeled the ads 'misleading.' Why? Because, she said, 'Condoms, if used correctly and consistently from the start to the finish' are effective. In response, I said it was 'blatantly irresponsible—both medically and morally—to endorse subway ads by the Gay Men's Health Crisis that were racist, vulgar and dangerous.'

"Hamburg's interest in abstinence, it turned out, was a ruse. Two years earlier she opposed a sex education curriculum in New York that stressed abstinence over safe sex presentation in the classroom. Worse, her efforts to fight AIDS show how irresponsible she is.

"In the early 90s, so-called sex clubs—the very places where HIV was being transmitted—were still open, even though gays were dying left and right. And what did Health Commissioner Hamburg say? Keep them open. By that time, gays were having sex in bookstores—legally! 'The clubs range from bathhouses and bars to movie houses and bookstores where patrons pay an entrance fee to have sex in open areas and closed rooms,' said

the *New York Times*. Hamburg compromised: no fellatio or anal intercourse was allowed, but masturbation was okay. When HIV rates continued to increase, she questioned, 'Is it still a lack of education? Is it burnout and a sense of hopelessness? Is it denial? Is it recklessness? We don't fully understand.' After all the funerals, she was the one in denial.

"In other words, Hamburg's judgment is deeply flawed."