



Press Release on Interim Final Rules regarding the HHS Mandate  
October 12, 2017

The National Catholic Bioethics Center applauds the significant actions taken by federal agencies on October 6, 2017, which begin the process of restoring respect for religious liberty and conscience rights in the United States.

The Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Treasury released two Interim Final Rules which replace the Obama administration's grudging and inadequate attempts to respect the beliefs and conscientious convictions of religious organizations, corporations, and individuals, all of whom were being forced to support health insurance benefits for contraceptives, sterilizations, and other reproductive procedures under the HHS Mandate. The Interim Final Rules take effect and provide legal relief immediately.

While these Interim Final Rules are a good beginning, there is still much work to be done. The Rules are not yet final, since the government has provided a period for public comment from October 6 to December 5, 2017, and abortion rights and other radical groups are sure to challenge the Rules in federal courts. It is important to note that the Interim Final Rules, as good as they are, do not resolve all of the religious liberty challenges created by the Obama administration, nor do they settle all of the litigation in which religious organizations such as the [Little Sisters of the Poor](#) were forced to engage. Finally, the Rules do not actually overturn HHS's [highly problematic designation of contraceptives and abortifacients as "preventive health care services"](#) which practically all health insurance policies are still required to cover. Still, this significant federal action, which includes the [promulgation of guidance from the Justice Department on respect for religious liberty](#), represents substantial and welcome action by the federal government.

*The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) is a nonprofit research and educational institute committed to applying the moral teachings of the Catholic Church to ethical issues arising in health care and the life sciences. The Center has 2500 members throughout the United States, and provides consultation to hundreds of institutions and individuals seeking its opinion on the appropriate application of Catholic moral teaching to these ethical issues.*