

## Resolution for Patients' Rights to Legal Healthcare Services

1 **WHEREAS** as of December 2013, nearly half of acute care hospital beds in  
2 Washington State are in hospitals controlled by or affiliated with Catholic  
3 healthcare systems; and

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5 **WHEREAS** the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Health Care Services, Fifth Edition*  
6 *2009* (ERDs) prohibits certain reproductive care services which are legal in the  
7 state of Washington, including some services which are the medical standard of  
8 care in emergency situations; and

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10 **WHEREAS** the ERDs prohibit some legal services in end of life care, which may  
11 prevent adherence to patients' advance directives; and

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13 **WHEREAS** Washington has 39 Critical Access and two sole Community  
14 Hospitals providing medical care to rural communities where patients do not  
15 have convenient or, in emergency situations, a safe alternate hospital; and

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17 **WHEREAS** Washington State has 43 Public Health District Hospitals, all of which  
18 are supported by taxes on the public and some of which are now under Catholic  
19 control; and

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21 **WHEREAS** patients are often not aware of the doctrinal restrictions in effect at  
22 their local hospitals, which restrictions may cause them serious harm or may  
23 cause them to receive unwanted prolongation of life; and

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25 **WHEREAS** the Attorney General issued an opinion on August 21, 2013 stating  
26 that if the state (or a part of the state such as a public hospital district) provides  
27 maternity care service or information, it must also provide "substantially  
28 equivalent benefits, services or information" regarding contraception and  
29 abortion; and

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31 **WHEREAS** pursuant to Governor's Directive 13-12 issued June 28, 2013, the  
32 Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has adopted rules, effective  
33 March 24, 2013, which will provide increased oversight of future mergers or  
34 affiliations which may lead to the restriction of legal services; and

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36 **WHEREAS** the DOH has also adopted rules to increase transparency about  
37 hospitals' policies with respect to admission, reproductive health care, end of life  
38 care, and nondiscrimination;  
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40 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington State Democratic Central  
41 Committee ask the Washington State Department of Health to carefully monitor  
42 compliance with its rules and with the Attorney General's opinion, to ensure  
43 citizens are assured timely, clear and convenient access to any and all legal  
44 healthcare services at their local hospitals, particularly at publicly supported  
45 hospitals; and  
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47 **THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that the Washington State  
48 Democratic Central Committee ask the Washington State Legislature to enact  
49 legislation ensuring (1) the public's right to receive the full range of any and all  
50 legal treatment options, (2) their right to referral to nearby legal healthcare  
51 services if such are not available at their hospital, and (3) their right to know  
52 whether their healthcare providers, in any setting, are required to subscribe to the  
53 *Ethical and Religious Directives for Health Care Services, Fifth Edition 2009* (ERDs).  
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56 Submitted by the 24<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Democrats to the Washington State Democratic Central  
57 Committee for consideration at its February 1, 2014 meeting in Vancouver. (Date Submitted 1/11/2014)  
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59 The WSDCC Resolutions Committee "RECOMMENDED A PASS" on this resolution at its February 1,  
60 2014 meeting in Vancouver.  
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62 This resolution was passed by the WSDCC at its February 1, 2014 meeting in Vancouver.