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Health care has been transformed from an essential community service to a commodity exchanged for profit... We won't tolerate separate but equal in education, but we have tolerated it in the health care arena.

John E. Curley Jr.
Catholic Health Association president and CEO, speaking in May on the monthly television series 'Washington Perspective' on CTNA HealthNet.

We can force the \$5 aspirin down to a nickel, but if all we do is to achieve cost control, without delivery reform, I fear we will have failed our fellow citizens... Reform must address the three pillars on which the American health care system is built namely, access, quality and cost control.

Sister Bernice Corell
Chairwoman of the CHA's Leadership Task Force on National Health Policy Reform, speaking to President Clinton's Health Care Task Force in March.

The entire Catholic people must be seen as an advocate for the basic right of health coverage, and the laity must step forward to support the inclusion of Catholic health care facilities in the national health care facilities in the national health plan without compromising their principles.

Archbishop Francis T. Hurley
Anchorage, Alaska, writing in a column for the June 4 edition of his archdiocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Commentary*.

Concentrations of economically disadvantaged people with serious health and social problems, coupled with inadequate reimbursement from Medicare and growing Medicaid patient loads, are adversely impacting the financial viability of numerous Catholic health care facilities.

From *A Profile of the Catholic Health Care Ministry, 1992*, by Edwin Fonner Jr., research and information director of Catholic Health Association.

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JULY 29, 1993

HEALTH CARE

CATHOLIC COURIER SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Hospitals brace for reform's ramifications

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

When Monsignor Charles J. Fahey, a member of President Bill Clinton's Health Care Task Force, spoke before an audience of medical professionals at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester June 18, he wanted to emphasize one thing.

"I am no shill for this plan."

Monsignor Fahey is a Fordham University professor and one of the nation's foremost experts on aging issues and long-term care. His speech was sponsored by the Diocese of Rochester and St. Mary's Hospital.

As a task force member, Monsignor Fahey emphasized he was in Rochester merely to promote discussion — not acceptance — of the Clinton administration's health-reform proposals scheduled to be unveiled in detail by September.

"This is the most significant social policy debate our country has ever known," he asserted.

Because it will affect health insurance, union/business relations, veterans' benefits, military benefits, Medicaid, Medicare, taxation structures, "nothing will have a greater restructuring aspect than health-care reform," the priest said.

Other observers and experts, including Catholic hospital officials in the diocese, agreed that Clinton's plan will engender sweeping changes in the way citizens relate to health providers, employers and government.

If taken to its ultimate end, experts say, Clinton's health-care reform package will revolutionize society because it centers on a concept that Catholic health-care experts have promoted for some time — that every U.S. citizen has a right to health care regardless of ability to pay.

The Catholic Health Association in 1990 stated: "Access to those healthcare services necessary for the development and maintenance of life is a basic human right."

To enable the nation to provide that right, the 600-member national health-care reform task force, headed by first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, met for several weeks earlier this year and was charged with formulating a health-care plan, Monsignor Fahey explained.

Such a plan would provide access for all citizens to a benefits package that provides quality care while decreasing costs, simplifying administrative procedures, eliminating duplication and reducing health-care regu-

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Above, the emergency room at Elmira's St. Joseph's Hospital, 555 E. Market St., is equipped to handle numerous varieties of medical emergencies, including this dog bite that brought William E. Gosline (left) to the emergency room on July 21. Physician's assistant Bill Vanduzer administers a local anesthesia to Gosline's left-hand before closing the wound with six stitches. At left, Angle Harrison in the Clerical Physical Services Department keeps busy with the outpatient paperwork required for everyone who enters and leaves the emergency room.



Photos by
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Staff photographer

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