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Andrew D. Rivas, J.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 7, 2007

Letter of Support for CSSB 439

Re: Proposed Changes to Texas Advance Directives Act

The Texas Catholic Conference and Catholic Health Association of Texas appreciate your consideration of the many bills related to revisions of the current Advance Directives Act, Chapter 166.

In a recent development, Senator Deuell and Representative Delisi have agreed to sponsor SB 439 which incorporates principles that are key to addressing concerns with present law.

Include nutrition and hydration as ordinary care;
Change the definition of "irreversible condition;"

Revise the process to provide better and more compassionate communication to the family; and
Extend the period of time of transfer to a minimum of 21 days.

Adopt the new definition of pre-terminal condition which clarifies and tightens language to address the concerns of the disability community.

SB 439 embodies all of these concepts. Representative Delisi and Senator Deuell have studied the issues and understand them. Therefore, we SUPPORT SB 439.

We believe that the patient and his or her family should be the first concern of any legislation impacting end-of-life care. Further, we believe that natural death with dignity is the primary goal of every individual and institution engaged in this process, and that issues related to the death experience are profoundly important not only to patients, families and communities, but also to the healthcare professionals who are involved, and who want to provide the most compassionate care possible.

We would greatly appreciate your support. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Andrew Rivas
Executive Director
Texas Catholic Conference

Brenda A. Trolin
Executive Director
Catholic Health Association of Texas