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To: House Human Services Committee
From: Christopher Dodson, Executive Director
Subject: Senate Bill 2071 - Medical Assistance for Pregnant Women
Date: March 14, 2023

The North Dakota Catholic Conference supports Senate Bill 2071 to help low-income pregnant women and unborn children receive medical assistance.

When the *Dobbs* decision was released, the Catholic bishops of North Dakota stated, “We cannot . . . rest with overturning Roe and legally protecting unborn life. Building a culture of life means making abortion unthinkable. This will require all parts of society to reexamine and address what they can do so that no woman ever feels that the death of her child is the answer to any situation. Businesses, families, churches, charities, and governments must support and implement policies and practices that are pro-family, pro-woman, and pro-child.”

In December of last year, the bishops put forth a set of legislative proposals called *Responding with Love* that identify what the state can do to help pregnant women, their children, new mothers, and families. Senate Bill 2071 falls within those proposals.

Responding with love means ensuring that pregnant women receive medical care so that new mothers and children have a healthy start, no matter what their financial situation.

Senate Bill 2071 is a very modest expansion of Medicaid for pregnant women. North Dakota's eligibility level for pregnant women ranks 41st in the nation. Even with SB 2071, North Dakota would rank 39th. Nevertheless, it is an important improvement.

We ask for a **Do Pass** recommendation on Senate Bill 2071,