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New York Requires Nuns Serving Dying Cancer Patients to Use Gender Ideology

Catholic Benefits Association Help Sisters Seek Relief in Federal Court

Hawthorne, NY -- The Dominican Sisters located in Hawthorne, New York provide comfort and nursing care for patients with financial need and suffering from incurable cancer. For 125 years, they have provided this ministry through their affiliate, the Servants of Relief for Incurable Cancer, known as Rosary Hill Home. When the New York State Department of Health sent a series of letters and a training curriculum requiring the sisters to align patient care and their training of their sisters and employees with State's gender ideology, they were disappointed.

Mother Marie Edward, General Superior of the Hawthorne Dominicans, stated, "we Sisters have taken care of patients from all walks of life, ideologies, and faiths. We treat each patient with dignity and Christian charity. We have never had complaints. We cannot implement New York's mandate without violating our Catholic faith."

The New York gender ideology mandate requires Rosary Hill Home and other long-term care facilities to house biological men in women's rooms even over the opposition of a female roommate, to permit residents and their visitors of one sex to access bathrooms set aside for those of the opposite sex, to use false pronouns, to use language and "create communities" affirming patients' sexual preferences, and to accommodate patients desire for extramarital sexual relations. Long-term care facilities are also required to ensure that their staff members are trained in "cultural competency" informed by the State's gender ideology.

The Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne and Rosary Hill Home are members of the Catholic Benefits Association (CBA). They have, through legal counsel provided to them by the CBA, asked the New York State Department of Health for exemption from these mandates because they infringe upon their Catholic values, burden their exercise of religion, and compromise their free speech rights. The State did not respond.

Martin Nussbaum of the First & Fourteenth law firm and counsel for the Sisters, said, “this was especially disappointing because New York’s law provides religious exemption for long-term care facilities affiliated with the Christian Science Church but not for similar Catholic facilities. The Sisters were left with no choice but to file suit in federal court, and the Catholic Benefits Association has helped them do that.”

Sister Stella Mary, O.P., Administrator of Rosary Hill Home commented, “our foundress, Mother Alphonsa Hawthorne, charged us to serve those who are ‘to pass from one life to another’ and to ‘make them as comfortable and happy as if their own people had kept them and put them into the very best bedroom.’ We intend to continue honoring this sacred obligation but need relief from the Court to do so.”

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Hawthorne Dominican Case page: <https://catholicbenefitsassociation.org/hawthorne-dominicans/>