To: Governor Bruce Rauner  
From: Christian Medical & Dental Associations  
Contacts: David Stevens, MD, MA (Ethic), CMDA CEO

Subject – VETO SB 1564 –  
Eliminates Rights of Conscience for Medical Personnel

Dear Governor Rauner,

Representing more than 500 healthcare professionals in Illinois I implore you to veto SB1564. This bill requires medical professionals to behave in a way they object to morally and/or medically and is unacceptable and must be rejected for the following reasons.

**SB1564 threatens healthcare access.** This law violates federal healthcare right of conscience laws such as the Weldon Amendment, the Church Amendment and other laws. The penalty for Illinois for doing so is loss of all federal Medicaid funding.

**SB1564 will drive compassionate health professionals often out of Illinois.** Without the conscience protection regulation and laws, many conscientious and compassionate medical professionals and institutions will be **forced out of medicine or leave the state.** Many faith based hospitals that provide services to thousands of patients may shut down rather than perform objectionable procedures. Over 95% of physicians in a national poll agreed, "I would rather stop practicing medicine altogether than be forced to violate my conscience." CMDA has student chapters on every medical school campus in the state. I have no doubt that those students will leave the state causing the loss of your significant investment in their education rather than being morally complicit by referring for abortion.

**It will burden the already challenged state budget with civil rights litigation costs.** CMDA and other faith based healthcare professional organizations will be forced to sue the state to preserve our most basic religious freedoms.

**SB1564 threatens to cause damage to the doctor-patient relationship.** The conscience clause is a necessary regulation to preserve the exclusive doctor-patient relationship. If SB1564 passes it would put us at risk of reverting toward a pre-Hippocratic medical ethic. Hippocratic medicine has served Western medicine well for over 2 millennia by insuring the patient could trust the physician's integrity to focus on care that was in their best interests. There is absolutely no evidence that a doctor who does not refer for abortion impedes a woman from getting one. Referral means I endorse the competency and integrity of the physician I refer too and I enter into a professional relationship with them. Like the driver of the getaway car for a bank robbery, I would become complicit in an immoral act even though I didn’t do the deed. One of the two patients I refer won’t leave their doctor's visit alive.

**SB1564 threatens a protection which is guaranteed by the Constitution.** Denying the First Amendment constitutional freedoms of one group is a threat to the constitutional freedoms of every one of us. This right will soon be under attack in other professions, in our schools, and even in your place of worship and mine! If doctors lose their right to practice according to their conscience without pressure or reprisal, then other fundamental rights such as our freedom of speech will also fall like dominos.

- 87% of people oppose forcing professionals to violate their moral objections
- 88% of the public wants a healthcare professional that shares their moral values but this law will strip those that don’t participate in abortion from the state.
- The majority of voters are less likely to vote for their elected officials if they knew they had taken away conscience rights.

Please Protect the Rights of Conscience for Medical Professionals and VETO SB 1564