



TO: Massachusetts Advocates of Reproductive Rights & Health  
FROM: Catholics for a Free Choice  
DATE: March 2005  
RE: Addendum to CFFC's Massachusetts State Report

---

*Catholic Health Care State Reports: Massachusetts* is one in a series of state reports produced by Catholics for a Free Choice (CFFC). This publication, along with reports on Wisconsin, New York, Illinois, Michigan, California and Texas, chronicle state-specific challenges when non-religious hospitals merge with Catholic-owned entities. The report also covers reproductive health at Massachusetts' Catholic universities, as well as important information that prochoice advocates need to know about the Massachusetts Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Each of these state reports chronicle the history and developments of Catholic health care and how it affects you: the consumer, the taxpayer, the reproductive health advocate and foremost, the patient. Knowledge is power. When it comes to your health, accurate information about your health care providers is especially vital.

Since the original publication of *Catholic Health Care State Reports: Massachusetts* in November 2003, quite a bit has changed for the church, the viability of prochoice legislation in Massachusetts and the health care infrastructure itself. Please note the following developments since the publication of the Massachusetts state report.

- The General Election of 2004 brought significant changes to Beacon Hill. Besides a prochoice majority in the General Court, Massachusetts has new prochoice leadership in the House; this represents a significant change from the era of "Speaker-for-Life" Tom Finneran and unprecedented opportunity for prochoice legislation.
- There are now fewer clinics in Massachusetts where women can go to obtain an abortion. The WomenCare clinics, which served Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, Brookline and the North Shore, closed abruptly, leaving some patients without a referral or follow up care. Remaining clinics include: Boston Medical Center; FourWomen in Attleboro; Planned Parenthood health centers in Boston, Worcester and Springfield; and Women's Health Services in Chestnut Hill.
- Long time lobbyist Gerry D'Avolio, Executive Director of the Massachusetts' Catholic Conference, announced his retirement at the end of 2004. He has yet to be replaced.
- An effort to consolidate parishes by the Archdiocese of Boston has decreased the amount of active churches in the state from the 713 listed in the report. The Archdiocese of Boston has plans to close a total of 80 parishes this year. Currently, there are 621 active parishes across the state, although this number is expected to fluctuate.

- Gay marriage is now legal in Massachusetts. (The pending decision is mentioned in the Report.) This has certainly mobilized the Catholic church in Massachusetts, as have recent legislative hearings on stem cell research.
- Ray Flynn, the former Boston Democratic mayor and former ambassador to the Vatican under President Clinton, has reemerged on the Massachusetts political landscape as a leading critic of the Democratic Party with an organization entitled Catholic Citizenship, which claims to educate Catholics on the political process in order for them to be faithful to the Magisterium.

Catholics for a Free Choice is committed to working with our advocacy partners in states across the nation to ensure a future where the reproductive rights and health of women are always advanced and protected. If you are interested in more information about CFFC's Catholic health care research and activities, please contact the Public Policy department at (202) 986-6093, or email us at [cffc@catholicsforchoice.org](mailto:cffc@catholicsforchoice.org).