News



Republican presidential nominee and former U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a visit to Alro Steel manufacturing plant in Potterville, Mich., Aug. 29, 2024. In comments to multiple media outlets the same day, Trump pledged his administration would require the government or insurance companies to pay for in vitro fertilization treatments, commonly known as IVF. (OSV News/Brian Snyder, Reuters)

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Former President Donald Trump pledged his administration would require the government or insurance companies to pay for in vitro fertilization treatments, commonly known as IVF, in comments to multiple media outlets.

IVF is a form of fertility treatment opposed by the Catholic Church on the grounds that it often involves the destruction of human embryos, among other concerns.

In an interview with NBC News on Aug. 29, Trump said that if elected, his administration would protect access to IVF but would have either the government or insurance companies cover the costly treatment. A Department of Health and Human Services fact sheet estimates that a single cycle of IVF costs from $15,000 to $20,000 and can exceed $30,000.

"We are going to be, under the Trump administration, we are going to be paying for that treatment," Trump told NBC, adding, "We're going to be mandating that the insurance company pay."

Asked by NBC to clarify whether the government would pay for IVF services or require insurance companies to do so, Trump did not specify but said insurance companies may pay "under a mandate, yes."

OSV News has reached out to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Catholic Benefits Association for comment, but has not yet received a response. Both of those organizations fought long-running battles with the federal government for Catholic employers' exemptions to an Affordable Care Act mandate requiring employers to provide coverage for contraception, sterilization or drugs and devices that may cause abortions in their employee health plans.

Trump told Kaitlyn Buss, a columnist for The Detroit News, "We're going to be making a major statement today that IVF treatments — you know I'm in favor of it — that IVF treatments will be covered by the government under a Trump administration."

Trump did not provide details on how his administration would pay for his proposal. Vice President Kamala Harris, his Democratic rival, has made IVF a talking point in her campaign after a ruling by the Alabama Supreme Court found that frozen embryos qualify as children under the state law's wrongful death law. Lawmakers in that state later enacted legal protections for IVF.

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The 1987 document from the Congregation (now Dicastery) for the Doctrine of the Faith known as "Donum Vitae" or "The Gift of Life," states the church opposes IVF and related practices, including gestational surrogacy, in part because "the connection between in vitro fertilization and the voluntary destruction of human embryos occurs too often."

Issued by then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, the teaching named the "right to life and physical integrity from the moment of conception until death" and "the child's right to be conceived, brought into the world and brought up by his parents" as behind the church's moral objections to those practices.

It emphasized, "The political authority consequently cannot give approval to the calling of human beings into existence through procedures which would expose them to those very grave risks noted previously."

The teaching warned further, "The possible recognition by positive law and the political authorities of techniques of artificial transmission of life and the experimentation connected with it would widen the breach already opened by the legalization of abortion."

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 238,126 patients underwent IVF treatment in 2021, resulting in 112,088 clinical pregnancies and 91,906 live births.