News



A poster is seen Dec. 5, 2024, attached to a lamp post outside the Hilton hotel near the scene where the CEO of UnitedHealthcare Brian Thompson was ambushed and shot dead the day before in New York City's midtown Manhattan neighborhood. (OSV News/Mike Segar, Reuters)

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Washington, D.C. — December 6, 2024
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The Catholic Health Association of the United States said the national organization, along with the Catholic health community, is "shocked and grieved" by the public killing of UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson at the hands of a masked gunman.

The 50-year-old executive was shot to death Dec. 4 at about 6:45 a.m. while walking to a Hilton hotel in midtown Manhattan, New York, for his company's annual investor conference.

The suspect, who was captured on several surveillance cameras, appeared to have intentionally targeted Thompson, stationing himself outside of the hotel and calmly firing several bullets before escaping on foot and electric bike. He was last seen entering Central Park.

A citywide manhunt has so far failed to locate him, although police have advised they are using facial recognition technology of surveillance images, including several obtained from a Starbucks coffee shop the suspect had patronized shortly around the time of the brazen ambush on Thompson.

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The motive for the health insurance CEO's killing remains unclear. However, The Associated Press reported Dec. 5 that police sources confirmed three cartridge casings from the attack were labeled in permanent marker with the words "deny," "defend" and "depose" -- the term "delay, deny, defend" is commonly used to describe insurance company tactics to avoid paying health insurance claims.

"We offer our prayers for healing and consolation for the loved ones of Mr. Thompson," said Sister Mary Haddad, a member of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, and the Catholic Health Association's president and CEO, in a Dec. 5 statement.

"We also extend our sympathy and condolences to the UnitedHealthcare community during this deeply troubling time," she said. "As a Catholic health ministry, we affirm the sacredness of life and call on everyone to join us in condemning this and other senseless acts of violence.”

Established in 1915, the CHA (formerly the Catholic Hospital Association) works to advance Catholic health care in the U.S., which the group says comprises more than 2,200 hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care facilities and related organizations today.