

## Washington Catholic Charities limits employee health benefits

Maureen Fiedler | Mar. 2, 2010 NCR Today

The law permitting same sex marriage goes into effect in the District of Columbia Wednesday, March 3. It prohibits any kind of discrimination against couples in a same sex union.

So, in advance of that, Catholic Charities of Washington, in order to avoid paying health care benefits to employees who may be in same sex unions, announced that it would no longer cover *any* spouse of an employee unless he or she is already enrolled in the health care plan. Employees got the news by e-mail March 1, and the policy is effective March 2.

The archdiocese could have done what the Archdiocese of San Francisco did years ago, namely, decided to cover ?domestic partners? while expanding the definition of ?domestic partner? to include a parent, sibling or someone else in a household. Instead, it eliminated benefits for all spouses.

Catholic social justice teaching has long advocated worker benefits such as health care. It is sad that this teaching was trumped in order to discriminate against a whole class of citizens. It is a decision the Archdiocese will someday come to regret.

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