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Requirement for Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers to Provide Coverage of Preventive Services under the PatientProtection and Affordable Care Act

Comment On: IRS-2010-0017-0038
Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers Relating to Coverage of Preventive Services under Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Amendment

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General Comment

This comment regards the exemption for religious employers. The definition of religious employers is far too restrictive. Catholic hospitals, schools, and other social agencies provide incalculable benefit to American society. They serve many non-Catholics to their benefit. While they do not directly teach the Catholic faith and, indeed, that would be inappropriate, these institutions are Catholic in identity and their mission flows from Catholic teaching. They should not be required to provide insurance that includes services in direct opposition to their religious beliefs.

This country was founded by people seeking to practice their religion without persecution or government interference. Freedom to practice one's religious beliefs has been a basic tenet of American law and practice. Workers are free to choose for whom they work. Also, these contraceptive and abortafacient drugs are available at little or no charge from clinics and Planned Parenthood. The definition of religious institutions should be amended to include any institution that is owned and operated by a religious organization.