Michael Plog, Ph.D.
3212 Forsyth
Springfield, IL, 62704

217-793-2509
217-899-0778 (mobile)
mbplog @ comcast.net

To: Office of Health Plan Standards and Compliance Assistance
Re: RIN 1210-AB44
Date: August 29, 2011

I am the proud father and grandfather of both girls and boys. I want the same freedoms and rights for my daughters and granddaughters as for my sons and grandsons. Thus this letter objecting to the religious refusal clause. This draconian portion of the proposed legislation will prevent complete health care for my children and grandchildren.

The religious refusal clause will force people to live by the religious rules of their employers. This is wrong. Consider an example of a Catholic church employing non-Catholics as doctors, nurses, cooks, gardeners, and all sorts of people in the many Catholic businesses. The non-Catholic employees are not required to take communion or any of the other religious requirements of the church. Similar people hired by Pentecostals are not required to speak in tongues. Males working at a Jewish hospital/business are not required to be circumcised. So, what makes a person's health choices a legitimate concern for the employer?

The decision whether or not to use birth control should be the responsibility of each individual woman. If she wants to involve her husband, minister, great-aunt, priest, or anyone else, that is her choice to make—not the government's choice, the employer's choice, or anyone she elects to remove from the decision. The religious refusal clause eliminates this choice for female employees. If the choice is there, some women will elect not to use birth control. This should be their right.

It is equally immoral to force or prevent a woman from using birth control. Either is un-American. It is simply wrong to punish women (or men) because they do not share reproductive superstitions of their employers. You have the power to make this punishment legal, but it is still wrong.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my opinion.

Sincerely,

Michael Plog

cc: Senator Dick Durbin
Senator Mark Kirk
Congressman Aaron Schock
Others as Selected (e.g., ACLU, AHA, etc.)