

From: [AAUW Action Network](#)
To: [Sarah Fassett](#)
Subject: Support Access to Preventive Care and Contraception!
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AAUW Action Network
<<http://ffs.capwiz.com/aauw/images/actionnetwork091409.gif>>

Support Access to Preventive Care and Contraception!

We have some good news and we have some bad news. The good news is the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is considering adopting the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) recommendations that women's preventive health care be completely covered by any new health insurance plans under the new health care reform law!

The bad news, unfortunately, is that efforts are underway to expand "religious refusal" exemptions. If expanded, certain employers would be exempt from having to provide coverage for contraceptive services to their female employees if the employer is opposed to contraception.

An expanded exemption would allow an employer to deny their employees access to care that doctors, medical associations, and the IOM consider necessary. Besides, with or without an employer exemption, if an employee is opposed to contraception on religious grounds, she's unlikely to fill a prescription for birth control. But these exemptions are also a little sinister.

Religious refusal provisions allow the decision makers at "religious employers" to determine what sort of contraception, if any, their female employees will have access to. If the existing religious refusal exemption is expanded, it would create a broad definition for "religious employers," and could impact all employees at some schools, hospitals, charities, and elsewhere – even if the employee does not share the faith of their employer.

Here's more good news, however: HHS is currently waiting to hear from the public <<mailto:E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA@dol.gov>> ! That's right – AAUW has a chance for input, both as an organization and as individual members and e-advocates.

Take two minutes to send a brief message to HHS. Below, please find draft language we've written that we encourage you to edit and email. Please note: Your email will be published online (here <<http://capwiz.com/aauw/utr/1/JIYGOKZSNY/NKDROKZSOK/7226634966>>), so don't include your name, address or anything else you don't want on the web!

To send a message, copy and paste then edit the provided draft in an email to:
E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA@dol.gov

I join with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in asking you to accept the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine as pertain to coverage of preventive care under the new health care law, and to reject any exemptions for "religious employers." These preventive services are a critical element of the new law and would provide countless women better access to necessary health care.

While AAUW believes that “religious refusal” exemptions unjustly deny women access to contraceptive services, others, driven by an ideological distaste for all contraceptive services, are pushing the government to make exemptions even larger. Indeed, some groups are pushing for the exemption to apply to religiously-run health providers, so hospitals with religious affiliations would be exempt from the coverage requirement, even though they employ people of all faiths and ideologies. If granted, this larger exemption would deny access to thousands of women just because of where they work.

I urge you to ensure women have access to quality preventive care by accepting IOM's recommendations and rejecting the proposed religious refusal exemption provisions.

Remember: You can always help strengthen AAUW's efforts to support access to contraception and preventive health care by making a tax-deductible donation to AAUW <<http://capwiz.com/aauw/utr/1/JIYGOKZSNY/INVBOKZSOL/7226634966>> 's Public Policy Fund!

Double your impact! Tweet, Facebook, and forward this action alert to friends and family.

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<<http://capwiz.com/aauw/utr/1/JIYGOKZSNY/KYLXOKZSON/7226634966>> AAUW Dialog Blog for discussion, information, and advocacy for women and girls!

General AAUW questions? Please contact connect@aauw.org or call 800/326-2289 between 10 am and 5 pm Eastern, Monday through Friday.

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