

**From:** [Linda Messick](#)  
**To:** [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)  
**Subject:** Acceptance of recommendations of IOM for women's preventive health care with no exemptions  
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To U.S. Health and Human Services Department,

As a 74 year old woman, both mother and grandmother, it is abhorrent and outrageous to me that in this day and age women would be denied preventive health care services because of someone else's personal beliefs against contraception and other care. For 54 years, I have witnessed women fight for and win their "inalienable rights" that already belonged to them by the Constitution of the United States of America. Men have not had to do this. So do we women have to fight for our rights all over again? It simply is not reasonable or justifiable for some "outer power" whose personal beliefs conflict with the majority of women to deny them access to legal preventive health care services. This "outer power" would not like to have its rights denied by some one else, would they?

Would not the 8th Amendment which gives citizens "Freedom from excessive bail, cruel and unusual punishment" apply here whereby denying women preventive health care services is a cruel and unusual punishment" because the citizens affected are women?

Thus, I join with the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in asking you to accept the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine as pertaining 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.

I thank you in advance for using good judgment by supporting of women in their access to quality preventive care.

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