

PUBLIC SUBMISSION

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Docket: EBSA-2010-0018

Interim Final Rules for Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers Relating to Coverage of Preventive Services Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Comment On: EBSA-2010-0018-0002

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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Comment on FR Doc # 2011-19684

Submitter Information

Name: Martha A Osgood

Address:

2845 University Street
Eugene, OR, 97403-1669

Email: maroz@comcast.net

Phone: 541-484-1180

Organization: Center for Inquiry

General Comment

It is right that religious people and groups comment on issues and follow their own values (or not), but forcing the whole country to abide by those religious rules is not right. In the case of placing employees under an employer of potentially a different religion, and thus an outlook on preventive health services such as contraception without a copayment, enforcing arguable values on others is not right either.

According the Internal Revenue Service, certain not-for-profit organizations such as hospitals, charities and social service organizations are rightly treated as “special.” A healthy civil society nurtures the agencies doing the vital work of taking care of the public good.

The HHS decision to include full coverage for contraception services and counseling as preventive services is the result of sound judgment about what is good for all society. BUT allowing faith-based organizations to avoid this statute is, in fact, promoting the private interests of one religion—or even one conservative element of that religion—over the consciences of employees. This does not represent The Public Good.

Just as the majority of Catholic women who use birth control will not be served by the bishops trying to restrict coverage in their name, we deplore the restriction of individual freedoms in the name of religious freedom.

We urge you to revoke the proposed exemption and protect the individual freedoms of all those who would seek access to these important healthcare services, regardless of where they work.

Thank you for your good work,
Martha Osgood
Eugene, Oregon