

**To:** [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](mailto:E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA)  
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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.

Contraceptives are a necessary part of my life, without them I would not be able to get out of bed to actually make it to work several days a month. Women who need or want to use contraceptives to protect their health should not be punished because their employer lives in the dark ages. The Department of Health and Human Services should not condone and promote the institutionalized misogyny of any religious organization by permitting them to deny women vital healthcare. To my knowledge, no one is exempt from providing men with necessary healthcare and I believe that the same standard should be upheld for the women of our nation.

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