

**From:** [Judy Balsanek](#)  
**To:** [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Preventive Health care  
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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.

It was challenging for me when I worked for a religious healthcare organization in a special program for outreach to pregnant teens and young mothers and could not have any contraception information available for our patients. It would have created even more challenge for me if I as an employee would have been denied quality preventive healthcare as a female employed within that religiously-run health provider system.

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.

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