

# 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

**Document:** EBSA-2010-0018-DRAFT-0292

Comment on FR Doc # 2011-19684

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## Submitter Information

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## General Comment

Attention: CMS-9992-IFC2

To Whom It May Concern:

I oppose any exemption that allows an exclusion of preventative health services for some women based on their employers' religious beliefs. It is not religious freedom that is protected when such an exemption is made, but individual freedom that is restricted. Religious employers deserve no special treatment when it comes to providing women basic and necessary health care. No employer has the right to force religious tenets on its employees, whether that employer is defined as a religious or secular employer.

During a time when jobs are scarce, individuals do not want to jeopardize thier job. From an individual perspective, they are caught between a rock and a hard place. For instance, it will be difficult to use marketplace pressures to force employers to accede to the majority's wishes of contraceptive coverage. Therefore, it is the responsibility of government to protect the interests of those who are unable to protect themselves.

I encourage the adoption of the interim final rules without further relaxation of the definition of "religious employer." The proposed definition, as used by a majority of States, is adequate to allow the government to provide religious accommodation to religious employers, such as houses of worship, and to the few employees who fit within the definition without infringing on the basic rights of health care for women who might otherwise simply work for a religiously based organization.

Sincerely,

Dana Van Eden