

From: [Emily Loen](#)
To: [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)
Subject: No to Religious Employer Opt-Out on Free Screenings & Contraceptives
Date: Tuesday, August 02, 2011 1:22:32 AM

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

Thank you for the move to make screenings & contraceptives available free of charge. Thank you for covering the Morning After Pill! It is so expensive. I was honored and impressed by the truly smart and educated move to cover emergency contraceptive. Access to birth control and std/hiv testing increases reproductive health, personal autonomy and economic stability. I say BRAVO.

I oppose the ability for religious based employers to opt out on the following grounds:

- 1.No cost birth control and screenings benefits women and men no matter where they work, or what religion they practice. There is a reason birth control is going to be free. If it wasn't essential, you would not have implemented the ruling. And every women deserves access.
2. According to studies, 98% of all Catholic women of child bearing age have used birth control at least once in their lives. Hopefully, you will include Natural Family Planning options in the full range of contraceptive counseling. Though associated with religion, it is gaining popularity among all women. (This is a separate email!) However, many religious women do use hormonal birth control and deserve to make a personal choice, despite religious teachings.
3. Religious doctrine is not law. Adherents to a faith may decide what they will and won't follow, and those decisions change over time. While the leadership says they are against birth control, studies prove the congregation is not. To restrict access is to demand fealty to a concept many people do follow now.
4. While the church may have a doctrine against birth control, their beliefs do not supercede a citizen's right to the bounty of benefits of no-cost birth control & health screenings.
5. Not every woman who works for a religious organization practices that religion. Restricting access discriminates against women who may have to work at say, a Catholic hospital, because it's the only job available.
6. A strict religious doctrine is not bigger and better than a woman's right to control her reproduction. This is a personal issue. A woman's worth. A woman's right to decide her own future. A woman's access to HEALTH CARE. This is truly a no brainer - a woman's right to be well trumps any dogma that says otherwise.

My solution: Offer comprehensive EFFECTIVE natural family planning (like the Standard Days Method) counseling as part of the free services. Women want this regardless of dogma. 1 in 5 women are interested in natural family planning services, and when women are given the range of options without pressure, they pick a method that works for their life. So they are more likely to use it correctly, and it has a higher effectiveness rating.

*Offer comprehensive natural family planning options.

*State that all women will benefit from health care screenings, and all women will have access to the entire range of choices. Religious women can choose a hormone free option, or none at all. But no woman will be discriminated against due to her employer's religion.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I can't tell you how proud and happy I am of your decision. I trust you will do the right thing and respect all women's right to access.

Sincerely,
Emily Loen

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