

From: [Beth Williams](#)
To: [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)
Subject: Access to women's health services
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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.

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.

While I have heard that some religious hospitals, especially Catholic hospitals, would decline to participate and thus lose access to Federal funding, I have also heard that some 90% of Catholic women use birth control. In addition, the children of the affected employees would lose access along with their parents who may or may not also be Catholic. Some way must be found to insure all women access to women's health care - if not through private insurance at these institutions, then through some separate publicly available low cost women's health care insurance.