

**From:** [Rita Schwieters](#)  
**To:** [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)  
**Subject:** Support Access to Birth Control  
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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 it pertains 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.

Employers have no business determining health care for their employees. Contraceptives allow women the opportunity for family planning. It gives women like me the chance to wait to have children until we are in a position to give them all they deserve. Our employers have no business determining it to be immoral, and denying us access to it. 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.