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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

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Group Health Plans and Health Insurance Issuers Relating to Coverage of Preventive Services under Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act: Amendment

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General Comment

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced new guidelines that require health insurance providers and organizations providing health care plans to cover preventive health services, such as contraception, without charging a co-payment.

However, these new guidelines are currently facing fierce public opposition from organized religion. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and its members are lobbying HHS either to eliminate the new contraception guidelines or widely expand the current exemption clause – which now covers employers whose main purpose is to promote religious doctrine – to include religious hospitals and charities.

This means that hundreds of thousands of women would be left without preventative health coverage simply because of their employer's religiously motivated objections.

I urge you to stand firmly behind new guidelines, and reject any "exclusion clause" unrelated to public health.