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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

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

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Submitter Information

Name: Richard Dougherty

Address:

1020 Grosse Point

Irving, TX, 75061

Email: doughr@udallas.edu

Phone: 972-438-3527

General Comment

I write to express my opposition to the proposed regulation, requiring health care plans to cover contraceptives. Contraception is not health care, and its use has no rational connection to public health. While the law protects the right of individuals to purchase and use contraceptives, that right should not be used to require others to pay for an elective purchase. Many contraceptives are in fact abortifacients, and so requiring contraceptive coverage will effectively require abortion coverage.

In addition, the exemption for religious employers that is included in the regulation is unjustifiably narrow. As you know, employing the definition of religious institutions that is currently used by states has led entities such as Catholic Charities to be denied an exemption; that can only be considered a travesty. If there is to be an exemption, it should cover any religious individual -- not organization -- who, as an employer, understands the requirement to violate his or her religious convictions. To require otherwise is to violate the First Amendment, which protects the free exercise of religion, and to violate the conscience of millions of decent citizens of the United States.

Thank you.