

**To:** [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](mailto:E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA)  
**Subject:** Access to Preventive Care and Contraception!  
**Date:** Thursday, August 11, 2011 4:38:32 AM

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Department of Health and Human Services

To whom it may concern:

## DO NOT ENCOURAGE RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION

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 can't claim to know as much as AAUW, but I am aware of a form of employment discrimination based on the employee's religious beliefs that is considered illegal. Insurance companies have proven to be unethical and I can't imagine one being considered religious except for sales ████ purposes. Though an employer may provide insurance I am not aware of any instance where the employer has a right or a privilege to invade the privacy of an employee using his insurance. If the employer doesn't conveniently believe in a service or treatment for whatever, then it is up to him to let his conscience be his guide when seeking treatment or service. We are talking about a legal requirement to participate in the society known as the United States of America and any other interpretation that does not result in religious discrimination if

these “exemptions” were to proceed would be as incredulous as religion is proving to be.

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.

Opportunity appreciated,

R. Provencio