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To: [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)
Subject: In favor of IOM recommendations
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I feel very strongly that the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) should be adopted, allowing access to family planning services for women. Having been fortunate enough never to experience an unplanned pregnancy, I can sympathize with many women who may not be able to afford family planning and preventive services. In tight budgets, healthcare costs often fall by the wayside, exposing many women to unplanned pregnancies and their associated health risks.

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 find this kind of plan unacceptable.

I urge you to ensure women have access to quality family planning and preventive care by accepting IOM's recommendations and rejecting the proposed religious refusal exemption provisions. Currently, religious organizations (including mosques, synagogues, and churches) are allowed to deny coverage of family planning based on religious grounds. Individual women still have the right to decide to decline services if they have moral or religious objections. Why impose standards that will increase risk and deny care to others?