

From: [John Clark](#)
To: [E-OHPSCA2713.EBSA](#)
Subject: Rescind its mandate forcing private insurance plans to cover contraception
Date: Thursday, September 29, 2011 12:03:00 PM

I strongly oppose the Institute of Medicine's recommendation today that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate coverage of three particular practices in almost all private health plans: surgical sterilization; all FDA-approved birth control (including the IUD, "morning-after" pills, and the abortion-inducing drug Ella); and "education and counseling" promoting these among all "women of reproductive capacity."

Pregnancy is not a disease, and fertility is not a pathological condition to be suppressed by any means technically possible. The IOM report claims it would have good reason to recommend mandatory coverage for surgical abortions as well, if such a mandate were not prevented by law. But most Americans surely see that abortion is not healthy or therapeutic for unborn children, and has physical and mental health risks for women which can be extremely serious. I can only conclude that there is an ideology at work in these recommendations that goes beyond any objective assessment of the health needs of women and children.

The single largest abortion provider in the United States, Planned Parenthood, is celebrating the IOM's report. If the HHS does likewise and implements its recommendations, these controversial practices will be mandated for all insurance plans – public and private – without co-pay from anyone receiving them. The considerable cost of these practices will be paid by *all* who participate in health coverage, employers and employees alike, including those who conscientiously object to Planned Parenthood's agenda.

Without sufficient legal protection for rights of conscience, such a mandate would force all men, women and children to carry health coverage that violates the deeply-held moral and religious convictions of many. This new threat to conscience makes it especially critical for Congress to pass the "Respect for Rights of Conscience Act" introduced by Reps. Jeff Fortenberry and Dan Boren (HR 1179). I am writing to all members of Congress to urge their co-sponsorship.

The IOM missed an opportunity to promote better health care for women that is life-affirming and truly compassionate. I once again urge the Department of Health and Human Services to focus on the need of all Americans, including immigrants and the poor, for basic life-saving health coverage – not on mandating controversial elective practices in ways that undermine the good of women and children, the consciences of employers, employees and health plan providers, and the common good.

HHS should rescind its mandate forcing private insurance plans to cover contraception—including abortifacients—and sterilization, calling the mandate "unprecedented in federal law and more radical than any state contraceptive mandate."

Sincerely,

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