



## Black Women for Reproductive Justice

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### **Women and Medical Experts Agree: Contraception is Prevention**

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) released its report *Clinical Preventive Services for Women: Closing the Gaps*, detailing recommendations for specific preventive services and screenings that support women's health, including the full range of contraception approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

Black Women for Reproductive Justice (BWRJ) was excited about the news of the IOM recommendations. "We know that contraception is a vital part of the preventive health services that women need. We are glad these recommendations make that clear, and the health reform law mandates coverage for preventive care without financial barriers," said BWRJ President/CEO Toni M. Bond Leonard.

"Now women need the administration to take the next step and require insurance companies to eliminate copays and other extra fees for contraception, just like the rest of proven preventive health care," said Research & Policy Associate, Clinee Hedspeth.

Having thoroughly reviewed the evidence, the IOM's committee of experts found sufficient evidence to support eight recommendations about services that should be added to the preventive care for women promoted by the Affordable Care Act. The report notes that a comprehensive approach to contraceptive care is recommended "so that women can better avoid unwanted pregnancies and space their pregnancies to promote optimal birth outcomes."

The IOM report includes a number of other recommendations that are important for supporting women's health in addition to the recommendation for contraceptive care. The committee recommended lactation support and counseling for pregnant and postpartum women, including the cost of renting breast-feeding equipment. It also recommended screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence, services that can make it possible for health care providers to address both current health and safety concerns and future health problems that might result from intimate partner violence.

BWRJ is the Illinois Regional Coordinator for Raising Women's Voices, a national initiative working to make sure women's voices are heard and women's concerns are addressed as policymakers put the new health reform law into action. BWRJ will be sharing the new expert recommendations far and wide – and urging the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to adopt the recommendations in full.

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