



Contraception is Prevention *Make Sure Health Reform Treats It That Way*

The new health care reform law is lowering the cost of preventive health services by eliminating co-pays and deductibles for these services in all new insurance plans. Amazingly, however, contraception is not yet included in the list of preventive services exempt from this kind of “cost sharing” – even though medical experts agree that comprehensive contraceptive care plays a critical role in keeping women and their babies healthy.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) reviewed the evidence and in July recommended that the full range of contraceptives should be included in the preventive services covered without co-pays by health insurance. The IOM also recommended other important women’s health services: lactation support and counseling for pregnant and postpartum women, including the cost of renting breast-feeding equipment, and screening and counseling for domestic violence. Women’s health advocates are urging Health & Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius to adopt these recommendations in full.

Take Action Today: tell HHS to add contraception to the list of preventive services exempt from insurance company co-pays and deductibles so that comprehensive contraceptive care will be available at no additional cost.

[Sign our petition](#) at:

<http://www.raisingwomensvoices.net/contracpt-is-preventn-petition/>



Mobilize your friends and neighbors to speak out on this issue!

Between now and when HHS announces its decision, you can help secure this women’s health victory by raising the visibility of this issue in your community. You can make sure that policy makers in Washington hear the message loud and clear– comprehensive contraceptive care should be exempt from cost-sharing, just like other medically proven preventive health care.

Raise the topic at community meetings and educational forums on health reform and other places where women’s health is being discussed. Here are key points to make:

- Women strongly support removing co-pays for preventive health care services.
- Contraception is essential preventive care for women, and better access to comprehensive contraceptive care leads to better health for women and their babies.

To support a strong, evidence-based case for the policy, see reverse and to learn more go to

www.RaisingWomensVoices.net/wphc-info-central/

Eliminating cost barriers to contraception will prevent health problems for women and families

Cost-sharing requirements, like co-payments, make people, especially low-income people, less likely to get health services, including preventive care and prescription drugs.¹

In 2009, 30 percent of sexually active low- and middle-income women reported having put off a gynecology or birth control visit to save money; one-quarter of those who used the contraceptive pill reported saving money by using the method inconsistently.²

In states that made it easier for low-income women to afford contraception by extending Medicaid family planning coverage to more people, there was a dramatic drop in the incidence of short birth intervals (a year or less between babies) for women in the program. Shorter times between a birth and a subsequent pregnancy make preterm birth and low birth weight more likely, which has serious negative consequences for the babies' health.^{3, 4}

There is broad public support for making contraception available at no additional cost

Public opinion research shows that 84 percent of adults nationwide believe family planning services, including contraception, are important to basic preventive health care services. This strong support crosses many demographic lines:^{5, 6}

- 77 percent of Republicans, 88 percent of Independents and 93 percent of Democrats agree.
- 77 percent of Catholic women voters say insurance should cover the full cost of contraception
- Latinas and African American women ages 18-34 are almost unanimous in their support for this policy (89% and 92%, respectively).

Medical and public health experts agree with the public – contraception is prevention.

There is a strong public health consensus that contraception is an essential tool in preventing bad health outcomes for women and children. The CDC cites family planning as one of the top 10 public health achievements of the 20th century, noting that access to contraceptive services and supplies is responsible for expanding intervals between births, "contribut[ing] to the better health of infants, children and women."⁷

"Contraception is an essential and basic preventive health service; it reduces the number of unintended pregnancies and thus the need for abortion."⁸

Association of Reproductive Health Professionals

References

¹ Swartz K, Cost-sharing: effects on spending and outcomes, *Research Synthesis Report*, Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2010, no. 20

² Guttmacher Institute, *A Real-Time Look at the Impact of the Recession on Women's Family Planning and Pregnancy Decisions*, 2009. <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/RecessionFP.pdf>

³ Conde-Aguedelo A, Rosas-Bermudez A and Kafury-Goeta AC, Birthspacing and risk of adverse perinatal outcomes: a meta-analysis, *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2006, 295(15):1809-1823.

⁴ Zhu BP, Effect of interpregnancy interval on birth outcomes: findings from three recent US studies, *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, 2005, 89(supplement 1):S25-S33.

⁵ Survey Findings on Public Support for Family Planning, Lake Research Partners, June 3, 2011

⁶ Fully Covering Rx Birth Control, June/July 2010, Hart Research for Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Achievements in public health, 1900-1999: family planning, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 1999, 48(47):1073-1080.

⁸ <http://www.arhp.org/about-us/position-statements#11>