



**Press Statement by Cindy Pearson and Lois Uttley. Co-Founders  
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need  
September 30, 2011**

Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need today filed comments strongly supporting the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services decision requiring insurers to cover women's preventive services and urging the Department not to allow religious employers to deny contraceptive coverage to any of their employees.

The new health care law has already led insurance companies to expand coverage for proven preventive health services and stop charging co-payments for these key healthcare needs. That means more women can get the care they need to stay healthy, including cancer screening tests and vaccinations.

By August 1, 2012, all new health insurance plans must cover a robust list of additional preventive health services for women, such as well-woman preventive care visits, comprehensive contraceptive care, screening and counseling about intimate partner violence and abuse, screening pregnant women for diabetes, breastfeeding support from trained counselors, and screening and counseling for sexually transmitted infections. That means more women will finally get affordable access to the health care that is essential to our health.

Raising Women's Voices and many other women's health advocates filed comments this week, telling the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that women strongly support the decision to require insurance companies to cover contraceptive services without co-payments and without exemptions. On the other hand, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops disagrees. But other religious figures, including leading Catholic theologians, spoke out in support of this historic advance for women's health, as did many individual women who filed their own comments.

Women know the tough decisions that families with tight budgets have to make in difficult economic times. We know the impossible choices mothers face when they have to weigh the urgent demand of a rental payment against the important, but less pressing, need to come up with a co-payment for preventive health care. Furthermore, women bear the most intimate and immediate costs when insurance company charges keep us from getting contraception so we know how significantly this coverage can improve the health and economic well-being of our families. That's why public opinion research shows, again and again, that women overwhelmingly support requiring coverage of contraception, including more than three-quarters of Catholic women.

The health care law is already helping women get key preventive services that we need. And the best is yet to come – women are counting down the days to the time when the law will deliver on this important promise of insurance coverage without co-payments for the full range of proven preventive health care.”

*Raising Women's Voices is a national initiative working to ensure that the promise of health reform is fulfilled for women and our families. It is a collaboration of three national organizations: the Avery Institute for Social Change, the National Women's Health Network and the MergerWatch Project -- and state-based women's health organizations in 20 states.*

Contact Lois Uttley at [lois@mergerwatch.org](mailto:lois@mergerwatch.org) or <http://www.RaisingWomensVoices.net>