



HEALTH CARE REFORM TALKING POINTS

Contraception is Prevention

The new health care reform law will lower the cost of preventive services for women by eliminating co-pays and deductibles for these services in all new insurance plans. Amazingly, however, there is no guarantee that “preventive services” will be defined to include birth control. **Ask your representative to tell Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius to include contraception in the list of preventative services covered under the new law.**

Talking Points:

- ❁ A May 2009 report by the Commonwealth Foundation found that nearly half of women delayed or avoided preventive care due to cost.
- ❁ More than 17 million women needed publicly-funded contraception in 2006 because they could not afford it on their own, and that number continues to grow.
- ❁ It is clear that several of the lawmakers who adopted the provision praised the inclusion of family planning. In addition to a clear history of Congressional intent, a recent article in the Guttmacher Policy Review outlined a far-reaching public health consensus in support of family planning as preventive health care.
- ❁ Family planning has been listed as a preventive health service in every edition of the federal Healthy People series from 1979-2010,
- ❁ The federal law authorizing community health centers lists family planning among the preventive health services that the centers are required to provide, and numerous other federal programs and regulations also identify family planning as a critical preventive health service.
- ❁ Health care provider associations, such as the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Adolescent Medicine, discuss family planning as preventive care as do well-respected public health advocates like the American Public Health Association and the March of Dimes.
- ❁ In these tough economic times, more women are seeking to reduce the risk of unintended pregnancies. Still, unintended pregnancies are rising among poor women who do not have the resources to purchase contraception. A poor woman in the U.S. is now four times as likely to have an unintended pregnancy as an affluent woman.



Abortion Coverage in the Health Insurance Exchange

Under health care reform, states could prohibit abortion coverage in health insurance plans offered in new insurance “exchanges” that will become available in 2014. Ask your representative to ensure abortion coverage is allowed in your state exchange.

Talking points:

- ❁ Banning coverage of a privately funded, legal medical procedure is wrong.
- ❁ Abortion is a basic health care service that one out of three women will obtain in their lifetime.
- ❁ The new health insurance exchange will cover a large portion of American insurance purchasers. Insurance companies will want to get in on the action, and if they have to eliminate abortion coverage to make it happen, they probably will.
- ❁ Some policymakers suggest that women shouldn’t worry about this ban because they can just purchase an extra insurance “add on” to cover their abortions. But no woman anticipates needing an abortion, so unless her insurance plan in the exchange already covers it, she most likely will not purchase the “add on” separately. Since most women will be unlikely to purchase this “add on,” insurance companies will find it cheaper to simply stop offering it.
- ❁ For women who are poor, banning abortion coverage in the exchange is even more crushing. Right now, 25% of poor women who want to choose abortion can’t because the federal government refuses to pay for it. If *privately funded* abortion coverage is banned from the exchange, even those women who are able to purchase insurance, however minimal, will be unable to access it.
- ❁ If abortion coverage is banned in the new health insurance exchange, millions of women who currently have it will lose it. The idea here is to move forward toward reform, not to step back into the dark and dangerous age of wire hangers and backroom abortions.
- ❁ While we may not all agree with abortion or personally choose to have one, it is up to each family to make its own decisions. Women who choose to have an abortion should have access to safe and sanitary conditions.