



Concerned Clergy for
CHOICE

NCJW
National Council of Jewish Women

Religious
Coalition
for Reproductive
Choice



Faith Groups Applaud Report on Including Contraception in Health Care Reform

July 22, 2011, Washington, DC – Leading faith-based organizations, representing millions of individuals across the country, joined together today to applaud the Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report advocating coverage without copays of the full range of contraceptive services under a provision governing women’s preventive health benefits in the Affordable Care Act of 2010. The organizations include Catholics for Choice; Concerned Clergy for Choice; the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW); the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice; the United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries; and the United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society. They released the following statements:

Jon O’Brien, president, Catholics for Choice:

“Catholics use family planning at the same rate as do other women in the US. Polling shows that more than 60 percent of Catholics support health insurance coverage -- whether it is private or government insurance -- for family planning. Catholics have a responsibility to listen to our consciences in matters of moral decision-making, and to respect other people’s right to do the same. Removing unnecessary obstacles, as this report recommends, means that more women will have the means to follow their own consciences in deciding whether and when to have children.” Catholics for Choice was founded in 1973 to serve as a voice for Catholics who believe that the Catholic tradition supports a woman’s moral and legal right to follow her conscience in matters of sexuality and reproductive health. **Contact: David J. Nolan, 202-986-6093.**

Rabbi Dennis S. Ross, director, Concerned Clergy for Choice:

"In contrast to those faith leaders opposed to making contraception more available, there is wide and deep religious support for the IOM recommendations. Clergy from a wide range of denominations -- Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Unitarian ministers and more, Muslim leaders, rabbis and others -- underscore the importance of making sure that women have the ability to become mothers when they decide the time is right for them.

“We encourage women and families to make their own decisions and we support every effort to ensure that they have the best possible access to a full range of reproductive medical services. This is between the woman, her family and her health providers. As pastors during these difficult economic times, clergy witness many women and families challenged to provide for basics, including food, a place to live and health care. What a relief it will be for so many struggling households." Concerned Clergy for Choice, a statewide network of more than 1000 religious leaders from a wide range of denominations, is dedicated to protecting and expanding access to a full range of reproductive health services. **Contact: Rabbi Dennis S. Ross, director, 518-436-8408 x 238.**

Linda Slucker, president, National Council of Jewish Women:

“The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) applauds the recommendation of the IOM. NCJW believes strongly that women’s health, autonomy, equality, and freedom of conscience

require that contraception and related services be treated as the essential preventive services we know they are. We urge Health and Human Services Secretary Sebelius to incorporate the IOM guidance in the health reform law's regulations to ensure that the full range of contraceptive services and supplies be provided for women in every insurance plan without co-payments or other onerous costs." NCJW is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Inspired by Jewish values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for women, children, and families and by safeguarding individual rights and freedoms. **Contact: Amy Cotton, 202-296-2588 x 7.**

Rev. Dr. Carlton W. Veazey, president and CEO, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice:

"The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC), the nation's interfaith organization supporting reproductive rights, commends the Institute of Medicine's recommendations on contraceptive coverage. At long last, we are on the verge of recognizing a moral value embraced across the religious spectrum: that our nation has a responsibility to ensure that all Americans have access to the means to plan their families.

"The ability to plan pregnancies is so important that RCRC considers it a moral value and a matter of social justice. Diverse religions recognize that family planning helps to build strong families, protect the health of women and children, reduce child and spousal abuse, and prevent unwanted pregnancies and reduce the need for abortion. RCRC strongly urges the Obama administration to adopt the IOM recommendations on contraceptive coverage without co-pays, a crucial step to meet the health needs of millions of women." **Contact: Marjorie Signer, 202-628-7700 x 12.**

Rev. M. Linda Jaramillo, Executive Minister, UCC Justice and Witness Ministries:

"For over forty years, General Synod resolutions of the United Church of Christ have supported women's access to the full range of family planning services including contraception. We believe equal access to contraception empowers women and couples to determine when and how many children to have. The Institute of Medicine's report is to be commended for its guidance on this issue. Our denominational health insurance includes coverage for prescription birth control." Justice and Witness Ministries, one of four Covenanted Ministries in the UCC, helps local congregations and all settings of the church respond to God's commandments to do justice, seek peace and effect change for a better world guided by the pronouncements and resolutions approved by the UCC at General Synod. **Contact: Rev. Loey Powell, 216-736-3715.**

Linda Bales Todd, Staff Executive, United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society:

"The United Methodist Church has an historic, strong stance in support of women's health and family planning because we believe that access to information, education and services on voluntary family planning and contraception is essential in reducing unintended pregnancies, to helping women stay healthy, and bear healthy children. We affirm the principle of responsible parenthood, and support the right for men and women to have the ability to choose when, or if, to have children. Each couple has the right and the duty to prayerfully and responsibly control conception according to their circumstances. Ensuring that affordable options are available under insurance plans, as the IOM suggests, would go a long way to helping individuals meet these obligations." The General Board of Church and Society is one of four

international general program boards of The United Methodist Church. **Contact: Wayne Rhodes, 202-488-5600.**

The Institute of Medicine report was submitted as part of the process of implementing the new health reform law. The report will serve as advice to Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, who will issue the regulations governing coverage under the law, expected in mid-August.

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