

**ACOG Statement on Institute of Medicine Report**  
***“Clinical Preventive Services for Women: Closing the Gaps”***

***July 20, 2011***

ACOG Executive Vice President Hal C. Lawrence, III, MD applauds the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Preventive Services for Women for recommending private insurance coverage of key women’s preventive health care services, saying “IOM’s recommendations will be instrumental in ensuring that women receive comprehensive, timely and clinically effective preventive care.”

ACOG, representing more than 56,000 board-certified ob-gyns and partners in women’s health, fully supported Senator Barbara Mikulski’s amendment to the Affordable Care Act, to guarantee women access to a full range of preventive services without cost sharing or deductibles. Preventive care, including breast and cervical cancer screenings, save lives. A 2009 report by the Commonwealth Foundation found that more than half of women delayed or avoided preventive care because of its cost. This provision in the ACA and the IOM Committee’s recommendations will go a long way in addressing this need.

In its report, *Clinical Preventive Services for Women: Closing the Gaps*, the IOM Committee identified comprehensive, evidence-based recommendations for women’s preventive health services that should be covered by health insurance plans with no cost-sharing for patients. As guided by statute, the Committee’s recommendations build on preventive health services recommended by the US Preventive Services Task Force, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and the Bright Futures guidelines on pediatric preventive care.

ACOG’s clinical documents have long been the leading guidelines for women’s health care, including preventive care. In the next few hours and days, ACOG will carefully examine each of the IOM Committee’s recommendations. Dr. Lawrence said of today’s release, “ACOG is pleased that the Committee’s recommendations mirror many of ACOG’s recommendations on best preventive care for women’s health,” including recommending that all insurance plans should cover:

- The full range of FDA–approved contraceptive methods, to help women control the timing, number, and spacing of births. Planned pregnancies—which for most women require contraception—benefit women by allowing them to optimize their own health before pregnancy and childbirth. An unintended pregnancy may have significant implications for a woman’s health, sometimes worsening a preexisting health condition such as diabetes, hypertension, or coronary artery disease. Planned pregnancies improve the health of children as well, as adequate birth spacing lowers the risk of low birth weight, preterm birth, and small-for-gestational age;

- At least one well-woman preventive visit, including preconception care, annually for adult women to obtain recommended preventive services, allowing for additional visits, depending on the women's health status, needs and other risk factors;
- Screening and counseling for intimate partner violence, which affects an estimated five million women a year;
- Testing for HPV as part of cervical cancer screening;
- Screening for gestational diabetes in pregnant women;
- Annual counseling for STI's and counseling and screening for HIV in sexually active women; and
- Comprehensive lactation support and counseling and costs of renting breastfeeding equipment.

ACOG looks forward to working with HHS towards timely and meaningful adoption and implementation of the IOM's recommendations.

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