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### **Women and Medical Experts Agree: Contraception is Prevention**

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) today released its report *Clinical Preventive Services for Women: Closing the Gaps*, detailing recommendations for specific preventive services and screenings that support women's health, including the full range of contraception approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

The women who make up the network of Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need (RWV) sent out a collective cheer across the country when the news of the IOM recommendations broke today. "These recommendations make it clear that contraception is a proven part of preventive health care for women, and the health reform law mandates coverage for preventive care without financial barriers," said RWV Co-Founder Cindy Pearson.

"We're eager for the administration to take the next step -- which means requiring insurance companies to eliminate copays and other extra fees for contraception, just like the rest of proven preventive health care," Pearson added.

Having thoroughly reviewed the evidence, the IOM's committee of experts found sufficient evidence to support eight recommendations about services that should be added to the preventive care for women promoted by the Affordable Care Act. The report notes that a comprehensive approach to contraceptive care is recommended "so that women can better avoid unwanted pregnancies and space their pregnancies to promote optimal birth outcomes."

The IOM report includes a number of other recommendations that are important for supporting women's health in addition to the recommendation for contraceptive care. The committee recommended lactation support and counseling for pregnant and postpartum women, including the cost of renting breast-feeding equipment. It also recommended screening and counseling for interpersonal and domestic violence, services that can make it possible for health care providers to address both current health and safety concerns and future health problems that might result from intimate partner violence.

During the months when the IOM Committee had been deliberating, RWV's Regional Coordinators across the United States have been talking with people in their communities about what it would mean for women's health and women's pocketbooks if copayments and other additional charges for contraception were ended. Excitement about this issue has generated a high level of activity in many states including Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Wisconsin where advocates are hosting women's health events, collecting petition signatures at local farmer's markets, and making sure that women's voices will be heard.

Starting tomorrow, RWV will be sharing the new expert recommendations far and wide – and urging the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to adopt the recommendations in full.

**[www.RaisingWomensVoices.net](http://www.RaisingWomensVoices.net)**