



## Talking Points on Reproductive Health in Health Reform

As members of Congress begin to debate the shape and cost of national health reform, conservatives are once again targeting reproductive health care. They have proposed amendments to draft health reform bills that would restrict women's ability to obtain comprehensive reproductive health services and information. Moreover, they are proposing to include broad provider refusal clauses that would allow health clinicians and institutions to deny women reproductive health services, without any protections for patients' rights and or any provisions to ensure access to care. We anticipate further proposed amendments, including an attempt to ban abortion coverage outright.

When you meet with members of Congress to urge passage of meaningful national health reform this year, ask them to reject any attempts to politicize our health care by singling out key reproductive services for exclusion. Here are some suggested talking points:

- 1. Women are strong supporters of health reform.** Pollster Celinda Lake has found that women are a key constituency for accomplishing health reform this year, and see it as an urgent task because of the economic conditions affecting families. <sup>1</sup>
- 2. Reproductive health is a key component of women's health across the lifespan.** An analysis by Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health makes a compelling case for a comprehensive "well-woman standard of care" and underscores why such a standard must include reproductive health care. Reproductive health, the analysis found, is a key determinant of women's overall health across the lifespan, and therefore must be included in health reform. <sup>2</sup>
- 3. Reproductive health care must be treated like any other type of health care.** Reproductive health care does not have to be specifically enumerated as a covered service in health reform legislation, because it would ordinarily be assumed to be included in the primary, preventive and acute care categories of services. But, reproductive health services *should not be specifically excluded* from coverage in health reform legislation.
- 4. Decisions about which benefits will be covered by national health reform should be made by an independent board using medical standards of care, not by members of Congress using politics or ideology.** Women's reproductive health care must not be fragmented or sacrificed for political gain. Women deserve health care that is guided by sound medical research and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Lake Research Partners & Herndon Alliance, "Women and health reform: Key Messaging Lessons," January 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Chavkin, W., Rosenbaum, S., et al, "Women's health and health care reform: The Key Role of Comprehensive Reproductive Health Care," Mailman School of Public Health, 2008.