

AAPLOG Statement on HHS Aug 1, 2011, “Contraceptive Mandate”

The American Association of ProLife Obstetricians and Gynecologists presents its Position Statement on the US Dept HHS “Contraceptive Mandate” announced Aug 1, 2011 for implementation Aug 1, 2012: The American Association of ProLife Obstetricians and Gynecologists objects to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services mandate that contraceptives, emergency contraception, and sterilization be provided for all women without cost. This mandate fundamentally violates the conscience and First Amendment rights of many individuals, institutions and health plans that seek to provide medical services in accord with their own beliefs, and prioritize medical treatments according to their own values. (The guidelines can be found at: www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/)

In particular, religious institutions, individuals and health plans should be free to provide care according to their convictions. The mandate restricts the ability to regulate insurance reimbursement for services to the very narrow category of “religious employers,” rather than acknowledging the basic right of all people to acquire health care in accordance with their beliefs. All physicians, clinics, hospitals and associations must retain the ability to provide and reimburse for services without coercion of this sort. And all individuals should have the right to receive medical care in a health system according to their own values and beliefs. In addition to the issues of coercion inherent in such a mandate, the regulation requires coverage of FDA approved contraceptives that have clearly documented post-fertilization effects. AAPLOG believes that human life begins at fertilization. We are especially concerned that coverage of ulipristal (Ella), related to the abortifacient mifepristone, is included in this new regulation. Moreover, many physicians believe that other types of contraceptives may have post-fertilization effects and object to their mandated coverage. AAPLOG especially opposes HHS announcement of this regulation without the usual 60-day comment period. We recommend that these objectionable provisions be withdrawn from the “Guidelines for Women’s Preventive Services” under the Affordable Care Act. We request that AAPLOG members ask their congressmen to protest these mandates and any other mandates under the Affordable Care Act. And we urge our members and their representatives to support [H.R. 1179 \(and its Senate version, S.1467\), The Respect for Rights of Conscience Act](#) (which will provide comprehensive protection of conscience rights for individuals and institutions). We urge that physicians educate their patients about these violations of their fundamental rights.