

December 1, 2009

Dear Senator:

The undersigned organizations committed to protecting and improving women's health appreciate efforts to advance health care reform that works towards improving access to quality, affordable and comprehensive health care for all Americans. To that end, we urge your support for Senator Mikulski's Women's Health Amendment, which will help ensure that health care reform meets women's needs.

The Women's Health Amendment will ensure that women have access to key preventive services they need throughout their lives by strengthening the bill's existing protections. A May 2009 report by the Commonwealth Foundation found that nearly half of women delayed or avoided preventive care due to cost—a serious women's health issue that any health care reform plan must address.

While the current bill takes important steps toward improving access to preventive health care by making those recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) available with no or limited cost sharing, USPSTF recommendations do not fully account for the range of preventive services a woman's doctor may recommend or that a woman may need. The Women's Health Amendment will allow HRSA to develop evidence-based guidelines to help bridge critical gaps in coverage and cost-sharing for preventive health services, the same approach the bill takes to address gaps in preventive services for children. This needed change is intended to make women's unique health care needs – from family planning and well-woman visits to breast cancer screening and preconception counseling that promotes healthier pregnancies and optimal birth outcomes-- more accessible and affordable for women.

As you consider health care reform legislation, we urge you to vote in favor of the Mikulski Women's Health Amendment that will help millions of women receive essential health care.

Sincerely,

National Women's Law Center
Advocates for Youth
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Civil Liberties Union
American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM)
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
American College of Radiology (ACR)
American Medical Women's Association
American Nurses Association (ANA)
American Psychological Association
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN)
Break the Cycle
Center for Reproductive Rights

Family Violence Prevention Fund
Jewish Women International
March of Dimes
Maryland Women's Coalition for Health Care Reform
Medical Students for Choice
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)
The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy
National Cervical Cancer Coalition (NCCC) - HPV Cancer Coalition
The National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association (NFPRHA)
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina Health Network
National Organization for Women (NOW)
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Health Network
Ovarian Cancer National Alliance
OWL - The Voice of Midlife and Older Women
Physicians for Reproductive Choice & Health (PRCH)
Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS)
YWCA USA