

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Rm. 314G
Washington, DC 20201



October 12, 2017

Michelle Cretella, MD, FCP
American College of Pediatricians
PO Box 357190
Gainesville, FL 32635

Dear Dr. Cretella:

Thank you for your letter in regards to the previous administration's mandate requiring religious institutions to cover birth control methods as part of employee health care coverage. We greatly appreciate hearing the views of the American College of Pediatricians. We have carefully considered your feedback, as well as input from all stakeholders on this issue.

As you may be aware, on October 6, the Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, and Labor issued two companion interim final rules that provide conscience protections to Americans who have a religious or moral objection to paying for health insurance that covers contraceptive/abortifacient services. Previously, Obamacare-compliant health insurance plans had been required to cover "preventive services," a term defined through regulation. Under those regulatory requirements created by the former administration, employers, unless they qualified for an exemption, had to offer health insurance that covered all FDA-approved contraception, which included medications and devices that may act as abortifacients as well sterilization procedures.

Under the first of two companion rules we issued, entities that have sincerely held religious beliefs against providing such services would no longer be required to do so. The second rule applies the same protections to organizations and small businesses that have objections on the basis of moral conviction which is not based in any particular religious belief.

Thank you again for taking the time to write us and share your recommendations. We look forward to continuing our work to advance a new era of health care that secures Americans' liberty, makes our system more responsive to the needs of patients, and increases access to high-quality, affordable health care choice.

Sincerely,

/s/

Janet Evans
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services