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Secular Coalition Supports Administration's Shift in Policy Regarding Contraceptive Care

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WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Secular Coalition for America supports the Obama Administration's shift in policy announced today, that will allow employees of religiously affiliated employers to obtain contraceptive services free of charge, directly from insurance providers.

Religious employers with a religious objection to providing contraceptive services for their employees will not be required to subsidize or provide such services. Instead insurance providers will be responsible for providing free contraceptive services directly to women who work for these employers. The new policy does not extend to employees of churches and other houses of worship that were originally exempt from the Health and Human Services regulation.

"The shift announced today by the President puts the choice in the hands of Americans, regardless of their employer, and demonstrates a commitment to the principles of religious liberty constitutionally guarantees us as Americans," said Herb Silverman, president of the Secular Coalition for America. "True religious freedom respects the right of individuals to make their own health care decisions, regardless of the religious beliefs of their employers."

The Secular Coalition continues to assert that an employer being able to deny its employees the full range of preventative health care benefits is not religious liberty—especially when those employees may not share the employer's religious beliefs. It is true religious freedom to provide the full range of options to the individual and let him or her decide for themselves what is appropriate.

The Secular Coalition will continue to oppose any legislative efforts to limit women's health care options based on religious ideology, including the MAP-21 Act amendment offered by Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), to the transportation bill, which is expected to be voted on as early as next week, and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 2012, introduced by Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.). Both efforts would reverse the no-cost birth control policy and are hostile to the religious liberty of all Americans.

The Secular Coalition for America is a 501 (c)(4) organization that serves as the national lobbying organization for atheists, humanists, freethinkers, and other nontheistic Americans. Composed of 11 diverse member organizations, SCA works to protect and strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all. For more information, please visit www.secular.org.

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