

HHS Gives Non-Profit Employers with Religious Objections An Additional Year to Cover Birth Control

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Last August HHS revised the definition of preventative care that non-grandfathered plans must cover without cost-sharing to include all FDA approved forms of birth control. The new definition is effective for plan years that begin on or after August 1, 2012. The rule contained a very limited exemption for "religious employers", such as churches, but did not include an exemption for non-profit entities affiliated with religious organizations, such as Catholic hospitals.

On Friday HHS announced that it was giving non-profit employers who currently do not cover birth control because of religious objections an additional year to comply with the new definition of preventative care services. Therefore, non-grandfathered group health plans sponsored by non-profit employers affiliated with religious organizations who currently do not cover birth control because of religious beliefs will not have to cover birth control at 100% until their first plan year on or after August 1, 2013.

A copy of HHS' press release can be accessed at <http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2012pres/01/20120120a.html>