

Fast Facts

Existing Family Planning Coverage in Public and Private Insurance Systems

Health reform is an important opportunity to extend high quality, affordable coverage to individuals and families. In so doing, it is necessary to ensure that affordability is not achieved at the expense of quality. One key marker of achieving this balance will be providing coverage for *at least* the benefits already in most typical health insurance plans—a basic concept that President Obama has repeatedly endorsed.

Currently, family planning services—including gynecological care and screenings, contraceptive counseling, prescription drug/device coverage, and related outpatient contraceptive services—are not only widely used¹ and widely supported² but are also covered by most public and private insurance plans or systems. In fact, family planning services are a core element of several public programs (see below).

Family planning services not only improve the health of women and their families, but they are also a cost-effective investment for taxpayers and the private sector alike.³ Therefore, it is critical to include these services in any basic benefit package that may be developed, and also to include them in prevention and wellness services or programs on par with those related to chronic diseases.

KEY FACTS:

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention credited family planning as one of the top ten public health achievements in the 20th century.⁴
- Providing family planning coverage, including prescription coverage for the full range of contraceptive methods, accounts for less than one percent of total employee coverage costs.⁵ In fact, estimates by the National Business Group on Health and others have suggested that the savings to employers by offering employees a full range of family planning coverage more than covers the minimal cost of offering these comprehensive benefits.
- The Congressional Budget Office included expanding eligibility for family planning services through Medicaid in its reports on options to reduce federal spending on health care.⁶ A similar provision for family planning scored a federal savings of \$700 million over 10 years.⁷
- Private insurance has a long history of covering family planning services and supplies.⁸ In fact, a nationally representative survey published in 2004 found that:
 - ♦ Nearly all (99.9%) of typical employment-based insurance health plans cover annual gynecological exams.⁸
 - ♦ At least 89% of typical plans covered almost every reversible contraceptive service and supply included in the survey.⁹
 - ♦ The vast majority (86%) of typical plans covered the five leading methods (diaphragm, injectables (both 1 and 3 month), IUD, and oral contraceptives).¹⁰
 - ♦ More than 93% of all typical plans covered related contraceptive services including IUD insertion/removal and diaphragm fitting.¹¹
- Congress also has a long history of recognizing the value of family planning services by including it as a core part of its public programs. This robust record means that including it as part of health reform would simply be extending a long-standing commitment to this set of services. Note, for example, that:
 - ♦ Since 1972, family planning services have been required covered services under Medicaid and are one of the few services for which cost sharing is prohibited.¹² In fact, as an incentive to further

encourage states to make family planning services widely available to Medicaid beneficiaries, the 1972 amendments also established a special matching rate of 90% for family planning services and supplies.¹³

- ♦ Federally qualified health centers—including community health centers, migrant health centers, health care for the homeless programs, and public housing primary care programs—are required to provide family planning services as part of their mandatory primary care services.¹⁴
- ♦ In 1998, Congress passed legislation that requires contraceptive coverage for federal employees who are insured through the Federal Employees Health Benefits Plan (FEHBP).¹⁵
- ♦ Under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, pre-pregnancy family planning services are the only medical service for which such funds may be used.¹⁶
- ♦ Family planning services are specified in statute as a covered service under the Social Services Block Grant to states.¹⁷
- ♦ The Indian Health Service includes family planning services as part of its required health promotion services.¹⁸
- Improving pregnancy planning, pregnancy spacing, and preventing unintended pregnancy is one goal of Healthy People 2010. Specific objectives within that goal include increasing the proportion of pregnancies that are intended, increasing contraceptive use among women at risk of unintended pregnancy, and increasing the proportion of health insurance policies that cover contraceptive supplies and services.¹⁹
- In its 1996 *Guide to Clinical Preventive Services*, the United States Preventive Services Task Force included a “B” recommendation for counseling concerning effective contraceptive methods to all women and men at risk for unintended pregnancy.²⁰

NOTES

- a. Although insurance plans may offer contraceptive coverage, some employers may not opt to cover the full range of family planning options. There is still work to be done with employers even if insurance companies offer comprehensive contraceptive coverage.

SOURCES

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