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#### Press Release

July 2011

### Institute of Medicine Report on Clinical Preventive Services for Women Will Improve the Health of Millions of Women and Families

*July 21, 2011* – Millions of women in the United States will benefit from the Institute of Medicine's "Clinical Preventive Services for Women: Closing the Gaps" report, which recommends that contraceptive methods and contraceptive counseling to prevent unintended pregnancy be provided to all women of reproductive age and as a result covered by health insurance. This recommendation could dramatically improve primary preventive care, especially for those women who have struggled to afford birth control.

"Everyone should be able to access all contraceptive options from their own clinicians, which is not the case today," said Ruth Lesnewski, MD, medical director of a federally funded clinic in lower Manhattan and education director of the Reproductive Health Access Project. "Many primary care clinicians are missing opportunities to provide their patients with contraceptive care. Some haven't kept up with the latest science in contraceptive management and aren't offering their patients newer methods like the ring and the patch. Others are still confused about emergency contraception. Many haven't been trained to provide methods like IUDs and implants or just don't see contraception as a key part of preventive care."

Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended, and about 40% of all unintended pregnancies end in abortion. Women with unintended pregnancies are less likely to initiate prenatal care promptly, quit smoking cigarettes, consume adequate amounts of folic acid and breastfeed their infants than women with intended pregnancies. Children born of unintended pregnancies are more likely to have a premature birth, die in the first year of life, suffer abuse, and fail in school.

Because contraception can be provided in primary care settings by all primary care clinicians, this decision will heavily impact the nation's growing network of federally qualified health centers, which serve over 20 million people a year and are expected to serve up to 40 million people by 2015. While family planning has long been a core component of federally qualified health centers, the IOM's new Women's Preventive Services recommendations create new, higher, clearer standards of care for all federally funded clinics.

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