

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD LEADERS OPPOSE
OBAMA HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN ON BIRTH CONTROL**

Dr. George O. Wood

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The Assemblies of God strongly objects to a ruling of the Obama administration that mandates health insurance plans must cover contraceptives – including drugs that can cause abortions. While the plan provides very limited exception for “religious employers,” church-affiliated hospitals, colleges, and social services are not exempt.

We join with many other religious leaders, including the National Association of Evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Church, in our strong objection to this attempt by the federal government to discriminate against persons of faith and religious communities. We encourage the members of the Assemblies of God to contact congressional representatives in voicing objection to this ruling.

This decision by the federal government violates personal conscience and religious freedom. Additionally, this intrusion by the federal government into religious rights granted under the First Amendment could have enormous negative implications for non-profit organizations that function with religious beliefs and values.

Our concern is that if this precedent holds, a door is opened to the federal government to impose other onerous requirements on church related institutions. For example, if the government can require religious institutions to offer prescriptions that lead to abortions; will the government then also have the right to require religious institutions to provide coverage for same sex couples? Will the government consider itself as having the right to impose upon church-related colleges, universities, and institutions a requirement that schools must alter their biblical commitment to student conduct and sexual orientation or lose federal grants and loans?

While evangelicals hold different views on contraception than the Catholic church, evangelicals realize the danger of establishing a precedent that leads to further and further encroachment by the government upon the First Amendment which states that the free exercise of religion shall not be prohibited.