



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Statement by Belle Taylor-McGhee, President and CEO of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health, Urging Senate to Pass Comprehensive Health Care Reform for ALL Women – Including Abortion Coverage**

(Oakland / Los Angeles, CA) - Women and their families face dire economic times and deserve fair and just health care access. Yet a few weeks ago, one of the most extreme pieces of legislation passed into the first iteration of the health care reform bill - **essentially denying women vital medical care.**

The Stupak-Pitts Amendment, which passed in the House version, prohibits any federal funding for abortion procedures within the new health insurance 'exchange' - including both the public option and private health insurance plans. This is bad public policy and compromises the health of millions of women who are currently uninsured. Moreover, this measure restricts health care access to individuals who would receive a government subsidy under the plan. For example, any four-person family making \$88,000 a year or less that receives a subsidy would be prohibited from buying an insurance plan that covers abortion.

**The Stupak-Pitts amendment is a clear demonstration of how women's health is being used as a bargaining chip in the health care debate.** In the U.S. a devastating restriction on abortion access already exists. For 32 years, the Hyde Amendment has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion under the Medicaid program. Now, legislators are looking to further pigeonhole women into riskier, costlier and life-threatening options in order to access basic reproductive health care.

We are equally concerned that both the House and Senate versions of health care reform contain provisions that limit the ability of immigrants to access or purchase health care coverage that they need. This is a human rights infringement that is morally indefensible.

Women may not anticipate their need for abortion, but it remains a legal right and a vital medical option for one in three women in the U.S. **As the health care reform bill moves forward through the Senate, we must demand that reproductive health care, including abortion, is available to anyone who needs it.**

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