



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

July 20, 2012

Tom Van Coverden, President and CEO  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
7501 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1100W  
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Mr. Van Coverden:

On behalf of 105,900 family physicians and medical students nationwide who make up the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I am writing to express our support for the provision of comprehensive family planning services at every Community Health Center (CHC) within the context of the mission and the available resources of the CHC system. The 2011 AAFP Congress of Delegates adopted a resolution entitled "Ensure Contraceptive Access for Patients of Community Health Centers" which recommended that we ask the National Association of Community Health Centers to encourage your member centers to provide family planning.

There is abundant scientific evidence that contraceptive services are an important component of preventive health services. One year ago this month, the Institute of Medicine issued the consensus report *Clinical Preventive Services for Women: Closing the Gaps*. The IOM report defined preventive health services as measures—including medications, procedures, devices, tests, education and counseling—shown to improve well-being, and/or decrease the likelihood or delay the onset of a targeted disease or condition. In that report, the IOM recommended that women's preventive services include a fuller range of contraceptive education, counseling, methods, and services so that women can better avoid unwanted pregnancies and space their pregnancies to promote optimal birth outcomes.

The AAFP is concerned about the reproductive health of adults and believes physicians should provide patient education and counseling to both men and women to decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies. This includes information about abstinence, the provision of contraceptives for routine pregnancy prevention, and providing a prescription for emergency contraception, in advance if requested. It includes the discussion of all forms of contraception, where to obtain them, and the reliability of each. In addition, the physician should explain how the different forms of contraception do and do not prevent sexually transmitted diseases.

The patients served by CHCs should have access to comprehensive family planning services. Unfortunately, we understand that many CHC sites do not provide access to contraceptive care services for their patients. The AAFP is mindful of the demands on CHC resources and supports comprehensive family planning services at every CHC given the resources available.

We appreciate your consideration and invite you to contact Teresa Baker, Senior Government Relations Representative at 202-232-9033 or [tbaker@aafp.org](mailto:tbaker@aafp.org) with any comments or questions.

[www.aafp.org](http://www.aafp.org)

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roland A. Goertz".

Roland A. Goertz, MD, MBA, FAAFP  
Board Chair