

Register shortsighted on free birth control

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I was astounded to read the Register's editorial of July 22, "Free Birth Control Proposal Goes too Far," opposing the Institute of Medicine's recommendation that health plans cover birth control products with no co-pay. We know unintended pregnancies cost the health care system millions of dollars each year.

Iowa Medicaid has a family planning waiver that provides free birth control methods. The Iowa Department of Human Service's calculations show the provision of birth control saved the state \$12 million and the federal government \$8 million over 5½ years. These are savings to the public health system; it can be inferred that private insurance systems would see similar savings.

To say women would somehow overuse health care through birth control is insulting. Co-pays and deductibles often result in women being unable to utilize birth control.

For families with very little disposable income, choosing to pay \$25 a month (\$300 a year) for co-pays for birth control, or using that money for food, rent or gas, is a dilemma often resulting in not choosing birth control and running the risk of an

unintended pregnancy. It behooves the system to help women and their families avoid unintended pregnancies.

The Register's overall opposition to no co-pays for preventive services including family planning is shortsighted. The Affordable Care Act requires certain preventive services be covered by insurance plans without co-pay or deductibles. These are services that help move our health care system from a "sick care" system to one focused on wellness and prevention.

— Jodi Tomlonovic, executive director, Family Planning Council of Iowa, Des Moines

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