



For Immediate Release

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Women's Health Advocates Applaud Supreme Court Ruling Upholding the Affordable Care Act

Raising Women's Voices for the Health Care We Need celebrated today's historic Supreme Court ruling upholding the federal health reform law, the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

"The Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Affordable Care Act is a tremendous victory for women and our families, including the estimated 50 million of us in this country who are currently without insurance," said Cindy Pearson, co-founder of Raising Women's Voices and Executive Director of the National Women's Health Network. "Women and our families already are benefitting from the many ways that the health care law has improved health access, and we stand to gain even more now that full implementation of the law can go forward."

With today's court ruling, women across the country can start counting down to August 1, when the ACA's new coverage requirements for women's preventive services go into effect, explained Lois Uttley, another co-founder of Raising Women's Voices. "In an historic advance, all new health insurance plans will be required to cover key women's preventive services without charging us co-pays," Uttley said. "Newly-covered services will include contraception, breastfeeding supports (including rental of breast pumps), annual well-woman's exams and screening for gestational diabetes, domestic violence and sexual transmitted diseases."

Raising Women's Voices has fact sheets explaining these new coverage requirements and other benefits and protections women and our families are gaining from the health care law on a special Countdown to Coverage website: www.countdowntocoverage.org. In addition to the new coverage requirements going into effect August 1, women are counting down to January 2014, when insurers will be barred from charging women more than men for the same health coverage, and will no longer be able to deny coverage to adults who have pre-existing conditions like breast cancer. Also in 2014, state insurance exchanges will open to offer affordable health plans to uninsured people and small businesses looking to cover their employees and Medicaid will expand to include all individuals under 138% of the Federal Poverty Level.

"Today's Supreme Court decision brings us one step closer to our goal of ensuring that everyone has the health coverage and care we need to live long, healthy lives," said Byllye Avery, founder of the Black Women's Health Imperative and co-founder of Raising Women's Voices. "Because of the Affordable Care Act, more of us will have health insurance, and that insurance will cover more of what we need, when we need it. This will help make women healthier and make it easier to take care of ourselves and our families."

Raising Women's Voices will be closely analyzing the portion of the court decision that appears to allow states to opt out of the Medicaid expansion authorized by the Affordable Care Act. "Medicaid is essential for the health and well-being of low-income women and families," Uttley said. "We need to make sure that all states take the steps necessary to provide those families with access to that care. However, we celebrate that the health care law's other provisions remain intact and will continue to help women get the quality, affordable health care the law promised to provide."

Raising Women's Voices is a national initiative working to make the promise of health reform real for women and our families. RWV has regional coordinators in 20 states. Visit www.raisingwomensvoices.net