

National Women's Law Center

In July and August of 2008, the National Women's Law Center diligently worked to inform and educate people about a leaked proposed Department of Health and Human Services rule that would have redefined common forms of birth control as forms of abortion. After a firestorm of protest over the initial leaked draft, the agency released the actual proposed rule, which cut the offending language conflating contraception with abortion, but still contained acutely damaging restrictions on women's access to reproductive health care. Under this officially proposed rule, all recipients of aid under federal health programs would be required to certify that they will not fire or refuse to hire anyone who has a religious objection to any health service, no matter how central to the job or to the health of the woman.

When the draft was first leaked in July, the Center moved quickly and aggressively to alert advocates, policy makers, and the public as to how this rule would, if passed, drastically affect women's access to reproductive health care—sending out a [news release](#); developing and disseminating a [fact sheet](#); [posting information](#) on the Center's blog, womenstake.org; sending an alert to its email network of over 35,000 subscribers; and providing quotes and context for the media. For example, Center staff were quoted in articles regarding the leaked rule draft in the [Washington Post](#) and [Medical News Today](#), and the [Wall Street Journal](#) utilized the Center's informational map, "Pharmacy Refusals: State Laws, Regulations, and Policies," in its piece about the leaked draft.

Now that the official draft version of the rule has been released, the Center has sprung into action once again—providing quick analysis to coalition partners, [the media](#), and [the public](#). In the waning days of the Bush Administration, abrupt and extreme administrative changes like this pose a real danger, and the Center's website—www.nwlc.org—will track these changes, their impact, and how they can be stopped.