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**THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION JEOPARDIZES WOMEN'S HEALTH —
TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO TAKE A STAND
Local Organizations Urge Public Comment to HHS Proposed Regulation**

Overland Park, KS — On September 25, 2008, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Department (HHS) will close the book on public comments to a far-reaching and dangerous regulation proposal.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America and the American Civil Liberties Union submitted formal comments opposing this regulation, which, if enacted, would jeopardize women's health care by allowing providers to withhold both services and the critical information women need to make fully informed decisions about their health care.

"This proposed rule will put women's access to birth control and the information they need to make health care decisions at risk," said Peter Brownlie, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri.

"This politically motivated regulatory change deliberately leaves the term abortion undefined, creating a dangerous space for ideology and political views to override established medical guidelines," Brownlie said.

This is a far-reaching rule for two reasons. One, 98 percent of women use some form of contraception during their lifetime. Two, this would affect any hospital, clinic, doctor's office, or pharmacy that receives federal funding, directly or indirectly, from HHS — a number HHS puts at 584,000 nationwide.

In addition, HHS estimates taxpayers will foot the \$45 million bill to implement this regulation, which they've put forth as a solution to a problem they've failed to prove even exists. It is deplorable that HHS would impose this cost on taxpayers at a time when 45.7 million Americans are without health insurance.

"The US government should not be taking steps that could further limit access to healthcare services for women and families," said Dan Winter, Executive Director of the ACLU of Kansas and Western Missouri.

"It is vital that Midwesterners push back against this cynical, new attempt to limit the health options of women and their families," Winter added. "People in the heart of the USA need to speak out against the Bush administration's repeated attempts to reduce the availability of vital information about family health care."

The HHS proposed regulation is now posted in the federal register, and a 30-day public comment period is closing in on us and will end on **September 25, 2008**. The public may submit comments directly to consciencecomment@hhs.gov.

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