Updated HHS Mandate Continues Attack on Religious Freedom

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 1, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Responding to a new proposed regulation today by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Family Research Council (FRC) expressed strong opposition to HHS and the Obama administration's continued violation of religious freedom through its "contraceptive mandate."

The mandate forces all health insurance plans to include abortifacient drugs (drugs with abortion-causing properties), sterilizations and contraceptives. The new proposed regulation to implement policies from the March 2012 Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking would simply continue to provide a fig-leaf of religious accommodation that does nothing to change the underlying discriminatory mandate.

Anna Higgins , J.D., director of FRC's Center for Human Dignity, made the following statement:

"Family Research Council strongly opposes the new regulation that continues to mandate that life-ending drugs and contraceptive services be covered by health plans of organizations that have serious moral and religious objections. The accounting gimmicks HHS is now proposing under the latest regulation fail to satisfy the religious freedom protections that exist in other current laws and in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"The proposal does not expand religious freedom to all organizations and does nothing to change the current policy that forces religious entities to pay for insurance plans that include abortion-inducing drugs, sterilizations and contraception. The mandate continues to force religious non-profit institutions as well as companies guided by a well-articulated and longtime moral code, such as Hobby Lobby, to violate their faith, threatening serious fines in the millions of dollars if they refuse to comply.

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