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**TO: Clients of Sitzmann Morris & Lavis Inc.**

**RE: Women's Preventive Services Guidelines**

On August 1, 2011, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced new guidelines for women's preventive services.

Background: Under the Affordable Care Act all non-grandfathered plans renewing on or after 9/23/10 must provide certain preventive care at no cost. This includes such services as annual physicals, childhood immunizations, mammograms, PAP smears, cervical cancer screenings, cholesterol and other screenings. See our SML Update dated July 19, 2010 for the lists of preventive services.

HHS had directed the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to conduct a scientific review and provide recommendations on specific preventive measures that meet women's unique health needs and help keep women healthy. The IOM issued its report on July 19<sup>th</sup> based on independent physicians, nurses, scientists, and other experts to make determinations based on scientific evidence. These guidelines were developed by HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration using the IOM report.

Key Provisions: The guidance adds the following recommended preventive services to be provided at no cost:

- Well-woman visits;
- Screening for gestational diabetes;
- Human papillomavirus DNA testing for women 30 years and older;
- Sexually-transmitted infection counseling;
- Human immunodeficiency virus screening and counseling;

- FDA-approved contraception methods and contraception counseling;
- Breastfeeding support, supplies, and counseling; and
- Domestic violence screening and counseling.

HHS also released an amendment to the prevention regulations that allows religious institutions that offer insurance to their employees the choice of whether or not to offer contraception services. This is modeled after language in 28 states' laws that mandate coverage of contraception.

Effective dates: Plan years beginning on or after August 1, 2012. This means that calendar plans must comply January 1, 2013.

A complete copy of the guidelines can be found at [www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/](http://www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/).

A Fact Sheet has also been published at

<http://www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/womensprevention08012011a.html>.

As always, contact your SML Account team if you have any questions.

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