

New Federal Recommendations To Improve the Quality of Family Planning Services

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Office of Population Affairs (OPA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announce new recommendations to improve the quality of family planning services. *Recommendations for Providing Quality Family Planning Services (QFP)* were developed collaboratively by the two agencies and are based on a rigorous, systematic review of available evidence and extensive input from a broad range of clinical experts. The *QFP* help family planning providers use the best evidence to provide the best care, allowing women and men to achieve their desired number and spacing of healthy children.

Defined Family Planning and Preventive Services

The recommendations define *what* services providers should offer during a family planning visit, and describe *how* to provide them. Family planning services include contraceptive services, pregnancy testing and counseling, helping clients achieve pregnancy, basic infertility services, preconception health services, and sexually transmitted disease (STD) services.

For the first time, CDC and OPA encourage using the family planning visit to provide essential preventive services such as breast and cervical cancer screening, in accordance with recommendations for women issued by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and adopted by HHS. The *QFP* also address the needs of male clients, include a special section on serving adolescents, and provide detailed guidance on educating clients about the effectiveness of long-acting reversible contraception. Overall, the new recommendations integrate and fill gaps in other guidelines for the family planning setting, including those developed for contraception, achieving pregnancy, preconception, and STDs and HIV.

Implementation Support for Providers

The recommendations give family planning and primary care providers the information they need to improve the quality of family planning services they deliver. For customizable job aids, training opportunities, patient education materials, and other implementation support, visit OPA's Family Planning National Training Centers website: www.fpntc.org.

For more information on the new *QFP* recommendations, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr6304.pdf>

