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WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, today welcomed landmark recommendations by the non-partisan Institute of Medicine (IOM) that would make birth control, counseling for domestic abuse victims, and a range of women’s preventative care services more obtainable for women under the Affordable Care Act.

“This is a landmark decision not just for women’s health, but also for women’s rights in America,” said Slaughter. “Access to contraception, counseling for victims of domestic abuse, and preventative screenings for HIV and other diseases will empower women to reduce unintended pregnancies and better protect themselves and their health.”

In a report today to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the IOM recommended that eight services, including family planning and domestic violence prevention screening, be recognized as preventive-health services that must be covered by insurance plans without additional costs. HHS tasked the Institute with advising the federal government on implementing pieces of the Affordable Care Act, passed in March 2010.

As the co-author of the original Violence Against Women Act, Slaughter was particularly pleased with the IOM’s recommendations to classify screening and counseling for victims of domestic abuse as a necessary preventative services. In April, Slaughter introduced the Violence Against Women Health Initiative Act, which would strengthen the ability of health care providers to identify victims of violence and help women from being victimized again.

“Domestic and sexual violence is all too common in the United States,” said Slaughter. “Nearly one in four women report experiencing violence in their life which is an absolute tragedy. If implemented, the IOM’s recommendations would greatly reduce the occurrence of domestic violence – and help victims take action to prevent it in the future.”

Slaughter’s legislation, [H.R. 1578, Violence Against Women Health Initiative Act](#) , serves as the first step in reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act which [Slaughter co-authored](#)

and was signed into law in 1994. The landmark legislation was reauthorized in 2000 and 2005 and will expire later this year. Since its passage, the Violence Against Women Act has transformed our criminal justice and social service system, helping to prevent and respond to domestic violence effectively.

For more on Slaughter’s work regarding the Violence Against Women Act, [click here](#) .

As Co-Chair of the Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus, Slaughter has long been a champion of family planning and reproductive health services.

Given the number of unplanned pregnancies which occur each year, she believes we must all work to provide the necessary support and counseling in order to improve access to contraception and knowledge of reproductive choice. Toward this end, she has sponsored the Prevention First Act since 2004. Several titles of the Prevention First Act were incorporated into the Affordable Care Act.