



Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Inc.

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Trump-Pence Administration Introduces Nationwide Gag Rule
Rule Would Make it Illegal for Health Care Providers to Refer for Abortion and Imposes New Restrictions Meant to Block Patients From Coming to Planned Parenthood Health Centers for Birth Control

Nationwide “Gag Rule” Has Never Been Implemented in the United States Before

MILWAUKEE, WI. – Last night, the Trump-Pence administration released a nationwide gag rule, marking a radical departure from how health care has operated in the United States up until this point.

The proposed rule, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services last night, but not yet posted to the Federal Register, would do three main things:

1. Make it illegal for doctors, nurses, hospitals, and community health centers across the country that participate in the Title X program to refer their patients for safe, legal abortion.
2. Impose new restrictions designed to make it impossible for patients to get birth control or preventive care from reproductive health care providers like Planned Parenthood.
3. Remove the guarantee that people are getting full and accurate information about their health care from their doctors. For nearly two decades, Title X law has been clear: Health care providers cannot withhold information from you about your pregnancy options. This rule means they can.

Additionally, the proposed rule includes a slew of additional changes designed to dismantle the program — including a new policy stipulating that Title X projects do not have to provide every effective and acceptable method of birth control. This is a sharp departure from the way the program has been operating, in which HHS put an emphasis on ensuring women have access to all 18 FDA-approved contraceptive methods. The rule also deletes the requirement that contraceptive methods provided by Title X projects be “medically approved.”

The rule also re-defines what “low-income” means — expanding it to now include women whose employers no longer allow them to have their birth control covered by health insurance — in an apparent attempt to rectify the gap in care caused by the administration’s previous rule on insurance coverage of birth control. However, the rule does not stipulate any additional resources or funding to help the program or providers meet this increased need.

The rule is expected to include a 60-day comment period after the yet to be determined date it is posted to the official federal register.

Statement from Tanya Atkinson, President and CEO Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin:

“Yet again, the Trump-Pence administration is making policy based on politics, denying women basic information from their health care provider. Women and men come to us at Planned Parenthood because they trust us with their health care, they trust that we will provide them with nonjudgmental, accurate medical information. No woman should be denied basic information about her health care — including safe and legal abortion. A president who doesn’t know the difference between HPV and HIV should not be making reproductive health decisions for millions of Americans.

“Everyone, regardless of their income or where they live, deserves the best medical care and information available. Under this rule, patients won’t get birth control, cancer screenings, STD testing and treatment, or even general women’s health exams. This is one of the largest-scale and most dangerous attacks we’ve seen on women’s rights and reproductive health care in this country.

“This rule prohibits PPWI, and so many other health care providers, from giving a woman non-directive, accurate information about abortion. Even if a woman’s pregnancy would severely affect her health — for example, she discovers that she’s pregnant after being diagnosed with cancer — her health care provider could refuse to tell her that abortion is even an option.

“This is opposed by the medical community, lawmakers, and public health experts. [Major medical associations like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians](#), and more oppose this rule. When a similar version of this rule was introduced in the 1980s, it was met with tremendous outcry and opposition from the medical community. More than [200 members of Congress and 100 public health organizations have come out in opposition to a gag policy](#).

“Planned Parenthood will not stop fighting for our patients. We will not stand by while essential health and rights are stripped away.”

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Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin is a nonprofit health care provider caring for 60,000 patients annually at 21 health centers. 97 percent of Planned Parenthood’s care is preventive health services including well woman exams, breast and cervical cancer screenings, birth control, HIV screening, and STD treatment

BACKGROUND:

Although Planned Parenthood health centers make up only about 13 percent of the Title X health centers, they serve 41 percent of the patients who get care through Title X. Preventing those patients from coming to Planned Parenthood health centers would mean many are left with nowhere else to turn.

Title X is a decades-old popular and effective program designed to ensure that everyone, no matter where they live, how much money they make, and whether or not they have health insurance, has access to basic preventive reproductive health care like birth control, cancer screenings, STD testing and treatment, and well-woman exams. It has received bipartisan support from Congress since its inception. Every year it serves more than four million people, although many people who get care through the program may not even be aware that they are Title X patients.

The domestic gag rule wouldn’t just affect Planned Parenthood. The rule “gags” any Title X provider from referring for abortion. It would affect every health care provider in the program, from community health centers to hospitals.

Planned Parenthood’s essential role in Title X in Wisconsin:

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin (PPWI) has been the state’s primary Title X grant recipient for more than 40 years and plays an indispensable role in serving thousands annually. PPWI is also a central source of allocating a portion of Title X grants to other qualified providers, broadening the program’s reach.

- In FY 2017, Planned Parenthood in Wisconsin saw more than 31,000 Title X patients, which is over 86 percent of the state’s total Title X population.
- Planned Parenthood has nine Title X-Funded Health Centers in the state.
- Title X Patient Income data:

- 60 percent of patients are below 100% [FPL](#)
 - 99 percent are below 250% FPL
- According to [Guttmacher, Planned Parenthood served 41 percent of the nation's Title X patients in 2015.](#)
- According to [Guttmacher, there are NO federally qualified community health centers in Wisconsin that participate in Title X.](#)
- Planned Parenthood is the sole Title X family planning provider in seven Wisconsin counties (Columbia, Dane, Milwaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha).
- [More than 70 percent of the Wisconsin counties Planned Parenthood serves have a shortage of health care providers.](#)
- [Nearly half of the Wisconsin counties Planned Parenthood serves will have no alternative family planning provider if Planned Parenthood health centers close.](#)
- Blocking access to care at Planned Parenthood would have a disproportionate impact on those who already face historically discriminatory barriers to health care as people of color, people who live in rural areas, or people with low incomes. [In Wisconsin, 31 percent of Planned Parenthood health center patients are Black and 18 percent are Latino, which are proportionately higher than the state's general population.](#)