

Title X: A Public Health Good

Public health providers, scholars and advocates, and the federal government agree: family planning is cost-saving preventive health care for women and men. Substantial public health benefits and cost savings emerge when preventive reproductive health care services are accessible. That is why family planning providers are such an important part of the public health safety net. Family planning providers have for years provided essential services for millions of low-income women and men with limited resources. Efforts to cut Title X funding will have adverse repercussions on communities across the country and the nation's goal of improving access to preventive health services for millions of Americans.

- The CDC has cited **family planning as one of the ten great public health achievements of the 20th century**. "Smaller families and longer birth intervals have contributed to the better health of infants, children, and women, and have improved the social and economic role of women... Publicly supported family planning services prevent an estimated 1.3 million unintended pregnancies annually."ⁱ
- The ability to access family planning services is necessary for promoting healthy pregnancies and preventing unintended pregnancy. Research shows that promoting access to contraceptive services and supplies leads to better birth outcomes and overall improved reproductive health practices among women. Family planning also results in better education attainment and economic security among people generally, and particularly among poor and low-income communities which traditionally lack access to comprehensive health care.
- *Healthy People 2020* recognizes that ***an unintended pregnancy, once it occurs, is expensive no matter what the outcome***. From a medical perspective, unintended pregnancies are serious in terms of the lost opportunity to prepare for an optimal pregnancy and the increased likelihood of infant and maternal illness. However, there are also significant social and economic costs not confined to unintended pregnancies occurring in teenagers or unmarried couples. In fact, unintended pregnancy can carry serious consequences at all ages and life stages.ⁱⁱ

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- ***Title X providers meet women's health needs for the duration of their reproductive health lives in the communities they live, regardless of their ability to pay.*** According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, “[t]he typical US woman will need birth control for more than three decades of her life, and not only to avoid pregnancy. For years, doctors have prescribed hormonal contraceptives to alleviate heavy bleeding, irregular periods, and acne and to protect against a number of other health problems that affect women, such as ovarian cysts, bone loss, benign breast disease, the symptoms of polycystic ovary syndrome, and anemia.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The Title X program is a public good that is needed more than ever in communities across the country. ***Cutting Title X funding would limit access to health services that the public health community resoundingly agrees saves money and promotes health for millions of patients throughout the country.***

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Ten Great Public Health Achievements -- United States, 1900-1999*, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (April 2, 1999). Available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056796.htm>.

ⁱⁱ *Healthy People 2020*. Available online at <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/overview.aspx?topicid=13>.

ⁱⁱⁱ American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, *Contraception—A Basic Health Necessity* (May 8, 2007). Available online at http://www.acog.org/from_home/publications/press_releases/nr05-08-07-2.cfm.