

Frequently Asked Questions on Challenges Facing the Title X Network

What is Title X? Whom does Title X serve?

For more than 50 years, the Title X family planning program has provided a critical pathway to preventive health care for communities nationwide, funding a diverse, nationwide network of health agencies that provide high-quality family planning and sexual health care including birth control, cancer screenings and STI services, with a priority given to people with low incomes, those in need of confidential care or who otherwise lack access to care.

Two-thirds of Title X patients have incomes at or below the federal poverty line, and most are uninsured or enrolled in Medicaid. Six in ten women who rely on the program for contraception say that a Title X provider is the only health care provider they see all year.

Currently, there are 86 Title X grantees that fund a network of health care providers in most parts of the country. In 2021, 1.66 million people received family planning and sexual health services from a Title X-funded health care setting nationwide, which is a fraction of the demonstrated need for publicly funded family planning care.

Why is Title X important in the conversation about contraception?

A Title X provider is often the only accessible source of health care for patients. Providers represent access points to essential preventive health and serve as a place of safety and trust for people in need. Indispensable to our nation's health care safety net, Title X plays an instrumental role in ensuring patients in need get the care they want without cost being a barrier, offering no-cost family planning and sexual health services to patients living at 100% of federal poverty or below.

How has your work changed post-Dobbs?

Providers are confused about what they can and cannot do as it relates to options counseling and abortion bans in their states. Patients are requesting the early removal and re-insertion of IUDs to extend the time frame that they have protection and there is an increased interest in vasectomy services.

Given the cascade of crises, clinicians are concerned about a future when patient privacy is not respected and are wondering how to chart pregnancies, early pregnancy loss, and other information that is critical to a patient's health but could carry legal implications based on where a patient lives. Data security and concerns about privacy may dissuade providers from capturing essential health information for fear that data could be used against them and their patients.

What has been the impact of funding shortfalls on family planning programs?

This critical component of the public health infrastructure has struggled through numerous obstacles for years—from federal budget cuts to Trump-era program restrictions to COVID. In

fiscal year 2023, Congress level-funded the Title X program at \$286.5 million for its ninth consecutive year, diminishing any hope to rebuild the program following Trump-era restrictions.

Shortchanging the field year over year puts providers and their patients in a fragile position. Some agencies have had to endure staff shortages, make shifts to their provider networks, reduce health center hours and limit their availability to take new patients – the majority of whom have no other health care options.

The situation is not sustainable anymore, particularly at a time when more people are scrambling to have their reproductive health care needs met. The program needs more money to reach more patients.

Why is contraception necessary in addressing the abortion crisis?

Although no amount of funding for contraception will ever negate the need for abortion, one critical aspect of our nation's response must be expanding access to high-quality, affordable birth control. In a world where access to abortion is severely limited, it is even more important for people who want contraception to be able to affordably and easily access it from family planning providers they feel safe with and trust. Both contraception and abortion are essential health care services and part of a full range of sexual and reproductive health care that allow each of us the freedom to make decisions about our own bodies and live with dignity and respect.