

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin: Goes to court to protect patient care

Posted on Wednesday, May 2, 2018

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Washington DC — Today, three Planned Parenthood affiliates, led by Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, filed suit in federal district court in Washington, D.C. against the Trump-Pence administration to fight for the four million people who depend on Title X, the nation's program for affordable birth control and reproductive health care.

Title X is the country's only initiative dedicated to affordable birth control and reproductive health care. This program, which more than four million people rely on each year, is meant to ensure that every person — regardless of where they live, how much money they make, what their background is, or whether or not they have health insurance — has access to basic, preventive reproductive health care, such as birth control, cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and regular check-ups. Many of the people who rely on it may not even know it exists, but without it they wouldn't be able to access this essential care.

In late February, the Trump-Pence administration began trying to completely remake the Title X program through a call for funding applications, changing the program so that it no longer focuses on either birth control or reproductive health care and instead pushes patients toward abstinence and tries to keep patients from coming to Planned Parenthood. Not only is this illegal, but it could have devastating consequences and threaten health care for millions.

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

“The Trump-Pence administration can’t just ignore the law. Not only is what they’re trying to do illegal, but it would also have devastating consequences for our patients. Today, Planned Parenthood is going to court to stop them. In Wisconsin, our health centers serve 31,000 people who rely on Title X for birth control, cancer screenings, and other preventive care. That’s 86 percent of all the people in Wisconsin who rely on Title X. Without Planned Parenthood, many people would have nowhere else to go for care. All of us deserve the right to access quality, compassionate, affordable health care, regardless of who you are, where you live, or how much money you make.”

The suit was filed by Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood of Greater Ohio, and Planned Parenthood Association of Utah in federal district court in Washington, D.C., and alleges that the dramatic changes HHS is making to the Title X program through its funding announcement are illegal because they are contrary to the Title X statute and regulations, which make clear that Title X is meant to provide comprehensive, evidence-based contraception and reproductive health services. The plaintiffs are asking the court to block the illegal funding announcement and continue Title X patients’ current access to care. The plaintiffs are represented by attorneys from WilmerHale and Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin is the direct grantee of Title X funds in Wisconsin since the program’s inception and serves 86 percent of patients who rely on Title X in the state. In seven Wisconsin counties, Planned Parenthood is the only Title X provider. Blocking Title X patients from Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin would have devastating consequences for patients’ ability to access essential reproductive health care.

Since taking office, President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have pushed policy after policy to take away basic rights and health care, including access to birth control. They have:

- Issued a rule to allow employers to deny birth control coverage to their employees
- Ended protections for sexual assault survivors on campus
- Tried to eliminate the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program
- Tried, over and over again, to block women from getting care at Planned

Parenthood

This is not the first time the Trump-Pence administration has tried to radically remake a federal program to push abstinence and ideology over the original program goals. Fewer than two weeks ago, it issued a funding announcement that would radically remake the successful Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) to push ineffective abstinence-only-until-marriage programming, rather than a wide range of programs that are proven to help young people stay healthy.

Title X is a decades-old, successful, and popular public health program designed to ensure people have access to birth control and reproductive health care. Planned Parenthood health centers serve 41 percent of the people in the program and are often the only places people can come to for specialized care like an IUD or the birth control shot. More than half of the people who rely on the Title X program are people of color: 21 percent of all Title X clients identify as Black or African American, and 32 percent identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Today, the U.S. is at a 30-year low for unintended pregnancies and an all-time low for pregnancies among teenagers. That is due in large part to increased access to highly effective contraceptive methods and sex education. Indeed, Title X ensures that women can choose from the full range of birth control options — including IUDs, implants, the pill, the patch, the ring, condoms, and fertility awareness methods — to find the method that best meets their needs. Taking away access to those methods is a significant and harmful shift in Title X policy.