

HEALTHCARE GROUP POSITION PAPER

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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THE ISSUE

Planned Parenthood is, again, being threatened with massive losses of revenue by conservative legislators in both the U S Congress and state legislatures across the country who are calling for a total and permanent “defunding” of Planned Parenthood.

OUR POSITION

Planned Parenthood is the oldest, largest, most trusted, non-profit comprehensive family planning and reproductive healthcare service provider in our nation. Its long-stated mission is to ensure the right of all individuals to manage their reproductive health by providing accessible, affordable medical and contraception services, sexuality education and advocacy.

We stand with Planned Parenthood and its mission.

EXPANDED EXPLANATION OF THE ISSUE AND OUR POSITION

Planned Parenthood receives funding from the federal government **ONLY** through Medicaid, Title X and Medicare insurance reimbursements for medical services related to contraception, STI/STD treatment and funding and cancer screening. Calls for “defunding” of Planned Parenthood in any federal budget discussion are a gross misrepresentation of the truth. **There is not now, nor has there ever been a “Planned Parenthood Funds” line item in any federal budget.** (Through an awarded RFP grant process, Planned Parenthood also receives some federal funds for programming that focuses on reproductive healthcare education, human sexuality and research.)

Medicaid provides funding for 25% of the 42.5 million women of childbearing age (15 – 49) in this country.[i] If federal funding to Planned Parenthood was prohibited, it is estimated that 2.5 million of these clients would lose access to reproductive healthcare because 75% of Planned Parenthood’s clients are low income, young, under educated, racial/ethnic minorities dependent federal dollars for their healthcare. Seventy-two percent (72%) of Planned Parenthood clients seen in rural, underserved areas fit into these categories.[ii]

There are about 14,000 federally funded/qualified health care centers that do the same services that Planned Parenthood’s 650 clinics do. Both types of clinics receive the same funding.[iii] Unlike Planned Parenthood, however, none of these other health centers do abortions. Planned Parenthood does medical and surgical abortions at nearly one half of its clinics.[iv]

Many of the federal health clinics do more services such as more extensive primary care, dental and behavioral healthcare. However, 4,100 centers funded through the Rural Health Centers program **are not required to do family planning services, nor are they required to serve low income patients or even offer a sliding fee scale for payment of services.** A 2014 CBO report shows that even the federal health centers that do provide contraceptive services fall short in those services compared to Planned Parenthood: RHC 1.3 million; PP 3.6 million.

Nearly one half of Planned Parenthood's 650 clinics are in rural, isolated, underserved communities where they are the "safety net" for family planning. Seventy-two percent of these rural Planned Parenthood clients fall into the category of low income, under educated, young, racial/ethnic minorities.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, "**defunding**" Planned Parenthood would put an unsustainable strain on the other federally funded health centers that would not actually balance out for nearly 10 years.[v] In the meantime many people would go underserved or un-served, as there would not be an affordable, accessible health center available to them. In some areas Planned Parenthood has become the **only** facility providing **any** medical care through Medicaid reimbursement.

THE OPPOSITION

There is a high degree of conservative political maneuvering, religious belief and personal emotions that has supported the anti-Planned Parenthood movement for decades across our country and in the United States Congress. The **anti**-movement's major focus has been to deny women in America a basic constitutional right of choice/control over their own reproductive life and well being. Also, the anti-movement has diligently worked to limit access to affordable reproductive healthcare services by targeting and negatively impacting our most vulnerable citizens through legislative barriers and changes to Medicaid.

Religious Opposition

Since Margaret Sanger and her friends opened our nation's first family planning clinic in New York City the Catholic Church has been a vocal and powerful opponent. Its opposition is based on the theological position of opposing the use of or dissemination of any and all family planning/contraception information. The only exception to their opposition is the natural rhythm method or abstinence. Also, the Church is opposed to the establishment of any family planning clinics such as Planned Parenthood.

Roe v Wade became the law of the land on January 22, 1973. Since that time **abortion** has become an immensely divisive culture war issue in our country. This war-like division has consistently been led by the Christian Right/Evangelicals who have become especially influential against support for Planned Parenthood which they mainly see as only an abortion provider – **period**.

If Planned Parenthood ceased offering abortions at any of its clinics, there would still be opposition groups calling for its "defunding" over issues of contraception. Currently, there are 22 different methods of contraception available. Some of them fall into the category of LARCs (long acting reversible contraception)[vi]. Many construe these methods to be tantamount to abortion – not surgical, but medical.

Political Opposition

Bowing to anti-abortion protests, in 1976 the United States Congress passed the Hyde Amendment which prohibited any federal tax dollars from being used for abortion. Eventually, three (3) exceptions were allowed: cases of rape, incest or endangerment to the life of the mother. State discretion was left intact. To date 32 states follow Hyde, 4 states do not, but pay for abortions by using their own monies from other state funds, 13 states only abide by Hyde because they are under court orders to do so and 1 state only allows the Hyde exceptions for rape and incest. (Probably unconstitutional, but never, yet, successfully challenged.)[vii]

Over these last 40+ years, the anti-movements have combined religious contraception objections with the politics of federal funding and accessibility and have morphed into a large, powerful, polarizing anti-choice movement. Although there are more than 600 official abortion providers in this country, Planned Parenthood is the primary target for the anti-abortion movement.

SUMMARY

The major objection to Planned Parenthood is totally enmeshed in all of the religious objections to contraception/abortion/human sexuality education and to federal funding issues around Medicaid, Title X and Medicare reimbursements. Since 75% of Planned Parenthood's clients use one or the other of these federally funded programs, any government policies designed to reduce reimbursements to any of these programs will have a direct and negative affect on the services that are offered by Planned Parenthood to these, our country's most vulnerable citizens.

We will stand in solid support of Planned Parenthood because:

- 1.) Only Planned Parenthood has a mission and commitment to provide affordable, accessible services to everyone regardless of ability to pay.
- 2.) One half of Planned Parenthood clinics are situated in rural areas often where no one else provides.
- 3.) Planned Parenthood supports the ACA's provision to include a mandate for preventive and contraception services offered under ACA guidelines without additional costs or co-pays.^[viii]
- 4.) If Planned Parenthood lost its federal insurance funding, it would amount to an annual loss of between \$5-6 hundred million—40% of its budget^[ix] This level of funding support would not be recoverable from donations and other sources.
- 5.) Planned Parenthood is the largest and oldest family planning provider in our county. Because of its long relationship with the esteemed Guttmacher Institute of Research, it has achieved an international standing as a EXPERT, in the fields of education and research in reproductive health and human sexuality and contraception.

[i] Kaiser Family Foundation, 2014, Women's Health Policy, "Medicaid's Role for Women"
Multiple government sources

[ii] Planned Parenthood Action Fund, article, "Medicaid and Reproductive Health"

[iii] CBO stat from Fact Check Report, January, 2017

[iv] Safe Places Project, Maddy Rasmussen, June, 2017

[v] Washington Post Fact Checker, January 18, 2017, Michelle Ye Hee, "Paul Ryan's Claim . . . "

[vi] Medical News Today, "Birth Control . . .", June 26, 2017

PP.org, All About Birth Control

[vii] Washington Post, "Ryan's Claim . . .", Michelle Ye Hee Lee, January 18, 2017

[viii] Planned Parenthood Action Fund, "Taxpayers Do Not For "Free" Birth Control," 2017

[ix] NPR Fact Check, August, 2015