

OPINION

Opinion: Planned Parenthood belongs in federal Title X program

David B. Schwartz, Opinion contributor Published 10:48 a.m. ET Aug. 5, 2018



(Photo: Patrick Oehler/Poughkeepsie Journal)

I chose obstetrics and gynecology as my medical specialty in the 1978. It has been my passion and my privilege to practice as an OB/GYN in Cincinnati since then. I have seen first-hand how the federal Title X family planning program has been quietly helping individuals and families since 1970. Now the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services plans to change Title X in ways that I believe would be disastrous.

In the U.S. more than 4 million people each year rely on Title X for affordable birth control and other reproductive healthcare. They get these services no matter where they live or whether they have health insurance. In addition to birth control, Title X provides wellness exams, lifesaving cervical and breast cancer screenings, family planning education, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and HIV testing. No Title X or other federal public money is used to promote or provide abortions.

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Title X helps prevent 1 million unintended pregnancies each year. Overall, publicly funded birth control such as Title X helps avoid almost 2 million unintended pregnancies including 440,000 teen pregnancies annually. Title X saves lives. It gives women control of their health, jobs, and economic security for them and their families.

Title X also saves taxpayers money. For every dollar invested in publicly funded family planning, taxpayers save \$7.09 in related Medicaid costs. That is a great return on investment of our tax dollars.

Planned Parenthood's 4,000 health centers in every state make up just 13 percent of the Title X health centers, but they serve 41 percent of all Title X patients. HHS does not dispute these facts.

So why does HHS want to stop low-income patients getting family planning and other healthcare services from Planned Parenthood under Title X?

The current administration does not hide that it wants to punish Planned Parenthood and other healthcare providers because they also provide constitutionally protected legal abortion outside the Title X program. The administration wants to ban Planned Parenthood and other providers from Title X unless they stop providing legal abortion and even discussing it with their patients. The ban will actually punish the more than 1.6 million low-income patients for whom Planned Parenthood is the only realistic source for family planning and other critical healthcare services.

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Due to the reduction of a state Title X grant, these services are in jeopardy—particularly in the rurals where the public health nurses provide multiple basic health services like immunizations, breast exams, pap smears, well baby checks, STD treatment, and family planning, Shaun Griffin writes. (Photo: Getty Images/iStockphoto)

It is especially troubling to me that this administration wants to intrude into the professional relationship between doctor and patient and control the medical information that the doctor provides in the best interest of the patient. It wants to force doctors to violate their ethical obligations.

Banning Planned Parenthood from Title X will inevitably increase the number of deaths from undiagnosed and untreated disease, the number of unintended pregnancies including teen pregnancies, and the amount of public money spent on Medicaid and other programs for families experiencing sickness and unplanned births.

In addition, HHS wants to push people toward abstinence programs and fertility awareness methods like the "rhythm method" or "calendar method" instead of more effective forms of birth control such as the pill, the implant, the birth control shot, and IUDs. Unintended pregnancies can only in

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Federal spending that will result if Planned Parenthood is banned and effective birth

control is discouraged by HHS.

Title X is not broken. It does not need to be fixed by these misguided changes.

It would be especially harmful to patients to ban Planned Parenthood, which has contributed mightily to reducing the number of unplanned pregnancies and abortions in the U.S. to historically low levels through its preventive reproductive healthcare services.

Dr. David B. Schwartz is a board certified OB/GYN who has been practicing in Cincinnati for the past 40 years. He has an independent practice still delivering babies and providing health care for the women of Cincinnati.



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David Schwartz (Photo: Provided)

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