



# Women's Health Matters !

Joint Budget Hearings  
Family Planning Advocates of New York State  
February 9, 2010

## Testimony of Tracey Brooks, President and CEO

FPA represents the state's Planned Parenthood affiliates, hospital-based and freestanding family planning centers, and a wide range of health, community and social service organizations that collectively represent an integral part of New York's health care safety net for women and men throughout New York State.

Family planning centers provide critical services such as family planning counseling, contraception, pregnancy testing, prenatal and postpartum care, health education, and treatment and counseling for sexually transmitted infections and diseases, to name a few. Patients are primarily women of child-bearing age. With the economic downturn, providers are seeing some variations in patient visits, with most reporting an increase in new patients over 40 who have recently lost health insurance.

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  - **For every one of those Medicaid dollars New York spends on family planning, the federal government reimburses the state 90 cents—a 90/10 match.**
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### Strategic reductions prove vital

Just a few months ago, when you were considering the Deficit Reduction Plan, FPA faced the reality of the state's financial situation. We realized that cuts were inevitable, so we worked with you, the Legislature, to identify ways to reduce family planning funding without compromising access to core primary and preventive health care services.

Funding for family planning is a cost-effective public health strategy. **In fact, more than 6 in 10 patients receiving care at a women's health center consider it their primary source of health care.** For every 1 dollar spent on family planning services in New York, 4 dollars in Medicaid costs are saved. And, for every one of those Medicaid dollars New York spends on family planning, the federal government reimburses the state 90 cents—a 90/10 match. Both of these savings are realized within the SAME BUDGET YEAR.

**On behalf of the women and men served by family planning providers, we thank you for working with us and targeting reductions.** While these reductions did cut into the health centers' ability to provide services, we know that across-the-board cuts would have done much more harm.

We urge you to keep the same family planning considerations in mind as you make the difficult decisions that lie ahead. There are cuts in this proposed budget that will again negatively impact the health care providers we represent; they include cuts to COLA and recruitment and retention funds. We are here today to urge you to be mindful of increasing demands for our services and dwindling health center revenues.



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### **Increasing numbers of New Yorkers are in need of family planning care**

A national study by the Guttmacher Institute found that, during this economic downturn, women are seeking to delay child bearing, while at the same time they are reporting problems paying for contraception. Our health centers are experiencing this trend first-hand. Increasing numbers of people are seeking the services of family planning clinics and increasing numbers of them are eligible for publicly funded services. And, those who are self-pay patients are unable to meet their financial obligation for their care.

### **A Perfect Storm is hitting family planning providers**

We also need to stress that our providers are struggling to preserve their core services. A host of fiscal elements have put them in the eye of a Perfect Storm, including:

- more than 15 years of static Medicaid rates;
- state funding cuts in the past few years;
- two years of mid-year budget cuts;
- delayed approvals of state contracts resulting in delayed reimbursements;
- reductions in private insurance reimbursements;
- more uninsured patients are unable to pay;
- the implementation of Ambulatory Patient Groups (APGs) is two years away from full implementation;
- high interest payments on credit lines that are forced to be used to maintain cash flow;
- reduced lines of credit; and
- charitable contributions, once relied on to fill budget gaps, have dried up.

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Any other business that had taken this many hits for so long would have closed their doors long ago. Family planning health centers are businesses that are operated prudently and efficiently. But, good business strategies can only last so long when income is slashed at every turn, including mid-year cuts to critical state funding. As a result:

- centers have merged, consolidated and closed;
- hours have been cut;
- staff have been let go; and
- benefits have been reduced.

### **Family planning providers are quickly running out of options.**

#### **Family Planning Health Care spurs economic stability**

Not only do family planning services preserve public health and safety, they contribute to a strong economy. A direct correlation was made between economic stability and the availability of reproductive health care by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last month as she addressed the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cairo conference.

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**There is a direct connection between a woman's ability to plan her family, space her pregnancies, and give birth safely, and her ability to get an education, work outside the home, support her family, and participate fully in the life of her community.—Secretary of State Hillary Clinton**

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Underfunding women's reproductive health care at the state level will most certainly impede New York's ability to rebuild the state's economic infrastructure. Healthy women and families contribute greatly to New York's recovery.

Secretary Clinton also iterated in her speech that, as a society, we are morally obligated to ensure all women in our communities have access to reproductive health care—not just those women with means. Underfunding family planning would reestablish a discriminatory health care system that New York has been striving for decades to reconcile.

## **Conclusion**

The Legislature has a history of supporting the work of our providers, although it has been zeroed out in the proposed Executive Budget.

Given the continuing fiscal crisis in the state and FPA's continued commitment to partner with you, we are not asking you to restore any other funds lost in the proposed budget; but we do ask for funding traditionally included by the Legislature to be renewed. In this time of fiscal crisis, this funding will be critical in preserving the jobs of those who provide services in our health care centers. This source of support arrives at the health centers during the most expensive operational months of their fiscal year.

We know this will be another difficult year. FPA is prepared to partner once again with the Legislature to preserve access to core reproductive health care services. We urge you to continue to keep FPA involved as you make decisions and to pass a budget we can count on for the 2010-11 year.

Thank you for your consideration.

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**We urge you to continue to keep FPA involved as you make decisions.**

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