



Memo

Two Pending Federal Rules Threaten New York's Family Planning Centers

One Would Reduce Medicaid Reimbursements...

More than 150 leaders from health care organizations across New York appealed to the Bush Administration to stop a proposed Medicaid rule that could close health care clinics – including family planning centers – across the state.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) rule would essentially change Medicaid payment methods to conform to Medicare fee schedules, resulting in drastic reductions in reimbursements for New York's free-standing clinics. The change would devastate not only family planning centers, but also adult day care centers, dialysis clinics, substance abuse counseling and mental health care, and developmental disability services.

If enacted, health care centers in New York stand to lose more than \$450 million in Medicaid funding. Family Planning Advocates has led the charge to block this destructive federal proposal.

"This misguided Bush Administration rule would reduce funding to New York's family planning centers by more than \$22 million," said Acting FPA President and CEO Susan Pedo. "It would be devastating to women and families who depend on family planning providers for basic health services."

Family planning advocates appealed to New York Members of Congress to place a moratorium on the rule. At the same time, they asked for a temporary increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP), which would provide an important economic stimulus to the State and protect Medicaid coverage for millions of Americans when they need it most.

Without contraceptive services provided by publicly funded health centers, there would be an estimated 1.4 million – 46 percent – more unintended pregnancies annually in the United States.

...Another Would Allow Providers to Deny Care

A rule proposed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would expand the ability of health care providers to withhold treatment, counseling or medical information based on religious or moral beliefs – without regard for the needs of patients.

If implemented, the regulation would obstruct access to women's health care and unnecessarily burden the health care system with costly administrative requirements.

"We should be doing everything we can to make sure all women have access to the healthcare they need, not undermining women's health, and I will fight to stop these dangerous plans," said Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The rule could reverse many of the policies that states have put in place to improve access to women's health care. In New York, these laws include:

- **The Women's Health and Wellness Act** (2002), which requires insurance coverage for many reproductive health services including prescription contraceptives.

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FPA and Planned Parenthood CEOs and public affairs staff from across the state met with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton in July to discuss the proposed HHS rule, which could block access to reproductive health care.



President's Message

Dear Friends,

With just a few months left in office, President Bush seems determined to enact new policies that will endanger the health of women and families.

The President's anti-choice agenda is well documented, but two proposed Bush Administration rules would further diminish access to reproductive health services.

One proposal (the HHS rule) could allow health care providers to refuse care to women in need of family planning services. The other (the CMS rule) could result in drastic cuts in federal funding to New York's family planning centers and many other community-based health providers.

Health centers would be forced to slash their budgets by reducing staff, services or both. Some will close altogether if the CMS rule is enacted as proposed.

These are clinics that deliver family planning services to hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers every year, including the most financially vulnerable. The threat is very real; women who need access to family planning services will no longer have it. The prospects are even more troubling given New York's current economic crisis.

FPA and family planning providers around New York are working hard to protect access to reproductive health care. With your help, New York's elected officials are keenly aware of what is at stake and are providing national leadership to preserve community health services. Go to FPA's action center at www.fpaofnys.org to ensure that your Member of Congress has heard from you.

The sky has not fallen – yet – but it is weakening under the weight of these federal rules and the economic downturn.

Thank you for standing with us at this critical time.

Sincerely,

Susan Pedo
Acting President and CEO
Family Planning Advocates

Family Planning Centers Hurt By State Budget Cuts

Part of Governor David Paterson's efforts to implement a \$420 million mid-year reduction to the state budget is to ask health care providers to live with less.

There are still more questions than answers about how budget cuts will be carried out, but a six percent, across-the-board reduction in state funding means family planning providers' budgets will be stretched thin.

Legislative additions to the state budget will also be reduced by six percent. But this cut was reduced from the Governor's original proposal of 50 percent because of intense legislative advocacy by family planning supporters.

Action Planned to Increase Voter Turnout

Planned Parenthood Action Fund (PPAF) is gearing up for a weekend of voter mobilization as part of its effort to reach one million pro-choice voters by Election Day.

The One Million Strong campaign is designed to demonstrate the importance of women's health care and make it an issue in the Presidential race and Congressional races nationwide.

The grassroots appeal to boost voter turnout is attracting family planning advocates from across the country, who vow to staff phone banks, host house parties and knock on 100,000 doors nationwide on October 18 and 19.

To participate in this national effort, go to www.party2win.com/plannedparenthood.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of New York chapters have hosted more than 100 house parties and dozens of phone banks across the state. Volunteers have reached 40,000 people in the process.

Election Day is November 4

Election Day is just around the corner. To learn more about local candidates and their positions on reproductive health and rights, visit the new Planned Parenthood Advocates of New York web site. Go to www.ppany.org to download and print out your local voter guide.

Federal Rules Threaten NY's Family Planning Centers

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• **The Emergency Contraception for Rape Survivors Law** (2003), which requires hospital emergency departments to offer emergency contraception (EC) to rape victims.

The rule could also interfere with the enforcement of federal laws designed to protect women's health, including those governing emergency care. Although the full impact of the proposed rule is uncertain, it could threaten women's access to basic health information and services, including common forms of birth control.

Reina Schiffrin, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Hudson Peconic, and FPA Board Chair Catherine Abate, participated in a news conference opposing the proposed HHS rule.



Paterson Signs Bill to Prevent the Spread of Chlamydia

Governor David Paterson signed the Expedited Partner Therapy Bill into law on September 26. Health care practitioners will now be able to prescribe antibiotics to the sexual partners of patients diagnosed with Chlamydia. Chlamydia can be treated with a single dose of antibiotics, but it is important for sexual partners to be treated to prevent re-infection.

Around New York

Planned Parenthood of Rochester/Syracuse Welcomes New President and CEO

James M. Stewart is the new president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region (PPRSR). Stewart, who most recently served as president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, brings extensive experience in health care, health insurance, HMO and nonprofit management to PPRS.



James M. Stewart

Ed Fund Publishes New EC Policy Brief

The Education Fund of Family Planning Advocates issued a new policy brief: *Medicaid Coverage of Plan B® Over-the-Counter: New York State's Experience*. The brief examines Medicaid claims data for 2007 by county, compares these to claims for Plan B® prescriptions for the prior year, and presents findings regarding the number of claims made for recipients that used Plan B®. New York is one of the few states in which Medicaid covers the nonprescription Plan B® product without requiring a fiscal order from a health practitioner. The brief calls for increased efforts to inform recipients, pharmacists and health care providers about Medicaid coverage for the Plan B® OTC product. The complete document is posted on the Education Fund's web site at www.edfundfpa.org.

Study Affirms New York's Decision to Refuse Federal Abstinence-Only Funds

A new study released by the Guttmacher Institute confirms that abstinence-only sex education is ineffective, affirming New York State's decision to drop federal funding for abstinence-only programs. Led by Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., the State cancelled federal abstinence-only contracts under the Title V program last year, redirecting funding to programs that can include comprehensive sex education. Comprehensive sex education programs, which emphasize abstinence first and the use of protection for those who have sex "is effective and does not send a confusing message to young people," according to Douglas B. Kirby, Ph.D., who authored the Guttmacher Institute study released in September.



FPA Participates in Health Care Conference

Dr. Steve Roussos, FPA Board Member Wilma Alvarado-Little and FPA Vice President for Planning and Policy Karen Anderson attended a conference on "Quality Health Care for Culturally Diverse Populations" in Minneapolis. FPA's poster presentation highlighted the Education Fund's work to strengthen cultural competency among family planning providers. To learn more about language and cultural competence in health care, visit www.diversityrx.org.

Planned Parenthoods hold "Stronger Together" Conference

Board members, Vox students and other friends of Planned Parenthood attended the *Stronger Together Regional Advocacy Conference* on September 27 in Rochester. Speakers included Shelby Knox, subject of the documentary film *The Education of Shelby Knox*, and reproductive justice activist Joan Webb Basile, author of *You Made Your Bed*, about her experiences with illegal abortion. FPA co-hosted the event with Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region, Planned Parenthood of Western New York, Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson and Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes.



Campus Connection

Elmira College Vox participated in the college's recent community service fair, successfully educating students about reproductive health and rights.

The University at Buffalo, Erie Community College and Niagara Community College were just some of the colleges that hosted *New Voices* at Planned Parenthood of Western New York in a series of targeted outreach activities raising awareness of the availability of HPV vaccine.

From the Hill and Beyond

College Students Take Action in Washington

College students from across the country came to Washington, DC, for Planned Parenthood Federation of America's Affordable Birth Control Week of Action. The students met with Members of Congress regarding the rising cost of contraceptives. A provision in the 2007 Deficit Reduction Act eliminated discounts to college health clinics. Birth control pills that once cost as little as \$10 a month now cost up to \$50 a month.

APA Finds Abortion Does Not Harm Mental Health

The American Psychological Association released a new study confirming that abortion does not harm mental health. Scientific evidence shows that the chance of mental health problems among adult women who have an unplanned pregnancy is no greater if they have a single elective first-trimester abortion or deliver that pregnancy.

FPA Albany Memo

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McCain and Palin Stick to Anti-Choice Agendas Efforts Underway To Educate Public Before November Election

John McCain and Sarah Palin are prepared to turn back the clock on women's rights and repeal the protections of *Roe v. Wade*.

Grassroots efforts have been launched nationwide to educate the general public about their positions on women's health.

In McCain's 26 years in elected office, he has maintained strong opposition to legislation advancing women's health care. His running-mate, Sarah Palin, is even more extreme in her anti-choice views.

"I think people now are beginning to look at what she actually stands for," said Cecile Richards, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "She line-item vetoed programs for teenage moms in Alaska. She is opposed to stem cell research. She believes that women, even in the cases of rape or incest, should be forced to bear the child. I think these are views that are not represented by most women in America."

Americans need to know where Palin and McCain stand on issues relating to women's health. McCain's record on reproductive health issues includes:

- voting against allocating \$100 million to prevent unwanted and teen pregnancies;
- opposing legislation that would have required abstinence-only sex education to be science-based and medically accurate; and
- voting against legislation that would have made prescription birth control compensable by insurance companies.

"Time after time, Senator McCain has shown that he is out of touch when it comes to women's health care," Richards said.

To learn more, visit www.plannedparenthoodaction.org.

*Americans
need to know
where Palin and
McCain stand on
issues relating
to women's
health care.*



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