

The Public Affairs Pulse

Keeping You on Top of Legislative & Advocacy Issues

MI Legislature Passes Budget without Medicaid Expansion

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan is leading the charge to sign residents up for health care coverage. Michigan was selected by Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) to launch a pilot program in Detroit that will serve as the model for affiliates across the country to enroll people for health care coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

In a few months, millions of Americans will become newly eligible for health insurance. We are dedicated to making sure people have access to essential health care services, and the first step is to sign them up for coverage. As a health care provider, Planned Parenthood is a trusted source of information which enables us to engage the communities we serve around the implementation of the ACA.

PPAM was selected to pilot a large-scale Healthy Neighborhood canvass program with 20 full-time neighborhood canvassers and a project coordinator from April to June in Detroit. Neighborhoods were selected that will have a high density of newly eligible recipients of health care coverage.

PPAM educated, engaged, and enrolled eligible individuals into Plan First!, Michigan's Family Planning Waiver as a model of how we can enroll newly eligible residents for full health care coverage under the ACA beginning in October.

The Healthy Neighborhood canvassers knocked on the doors of more than 60,000 women who likely qualify for Plan First!. During those conversations, individuals were offered information about Plan First!, the opportunity to enroll online, and the availability of services in all four of

the metro Detroit health centers and were given the opportunity to sign a post card in support of Medicaid expansion.

Thanks to the dedicated supporters of our advocacy work, PPAM had the field infrastructure and experience in effective and impactful outreach to diverse communities that made this program possible. The Healthy Neighborhood pilot program was a huge success, and we were able to deliver a model for PPFA to launch efforts in communities across the nation. Affiliates will be looking to Michigan and our proven track-record to prepare for implementation of health care reform.

Planned Parenthood Gears Up to Challenge Anti-Choice Ballot Initiative

In the latest attack on women's health care, an initiative petition has been launched to prevent private health insurance companies from covering abortion. Any abortion coverage would have to be offered through a separate, optional abortion rider. Today the majority of health plans cover abortion services. This is an end-run around democracy in Michigan. Its proponents are trying to go around Governor Snyder and the will of the majority of Michigan voters. Two Republican governors have already vetoed this legislation. If passed by the legislature, the proposal would not be subject to the governor's veto or a vote of the people.

The proposal deceptively implies that tax dollars are somehow involved in private insurance for abortion. NO federal, state, or local tax dollars pay for abortions in Michigan—it's already the law. The petition has nothing to do with how abortions are funded. It is about who decides what should or should not be covered by

someone's personal health plan. It would have legislators replace the judgment of women, their families, their faith, their health care provider, and their private insurers.

The first step in the process was approval of the petition by the Board of Canvassers. Seventy-five Planned Parenthood supporters packed the meeting to capacity in solidarity against the initiative. Beforehand, volunteers were joined by women's health champions Senators Gretchen Whitmer and Rebekah Warren to reinforce how important it is to defeat this proposal.

PPAM is launching a statewide Decline to Sign campaign to defeat the proposal. If its proponents do not collect the required 258,088 valid signatures by the fall, this measure will be defeated again.

Nearly two-thirds of Michiganders think this is outrageous. The government should not be allowed to dictate to the private sector what type of insurance coverage can be offered to private customers. Mandating that businesses cannot contract to cover abortions for rape victims, incest victims, and women who face health risks is an unwarranted intrusion on the marketplace and a threat to women's health.

This intrusion on women's health care would require women to buy a rider to cover their health costs in case they ever become victims of a crime like rape or incest or face a serious health challenge while pregnant.

Women deserve comprehensive care that will cover all of their health care when they need it. We are dedicated to making sure this legislative effort fails. The privacy and best interests of women's health must be maintained—no matter what!

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