

December 18, 2008
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David Nova, 540.819.3944

PLANNED PARENTHOOD CRITICIZES LAST-MINUTE REGULATION JEOPARDIZING WOMEN'S HEALTH

Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Inc (PPHS) is outraged by the last-minute imposition of a regulation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that jeopardizes the rights of patients to receive complete and accurate health care information and services.

“Under the new rule, doctors and health care workers can deny patients vital health care information and services, without the patient even knowing,” states David Nova, PPHS Vice President. Health care workers who oppose birth control could refuse to provide counseling to couples seeking family planning. Employees who oppose premarital sex could refuse to provide individuals testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Health care workers in emergency rooms could deny sexual assault victims information about emergency contraception.

“The Bush Administration is instituting a form of vigilante-ism whereby health care employees can decide for themselves what medical services and information they can withhold from patients,” says Nova. “This regulation instills a degree of chaos into an already overburdened and underperforming health care system.”

The rule will restrict health care access at nearly 600,000 health care facilities. With more than 45 million Americans currently uninsured and an economic downturn threatening the livelihood of millions of Americans, this is the wrong time to make access to health care even more difficult.

Roughly 200,000 U.S. citizens, federal and state elected officials, medical organizations, and health care advocacy and religious organizations submitted comments opposing the misguided rule. The regulation broadens the scope of existing laws and reaches beyond congressional intent by focusing solely on providers, with no protections to ensure patients receive critical health care information and services.

PPHS is urging President-Elect Obama and leaders in Congress to quickly repeal this disastrous rule and expand patients' access to full health care information and services. The new regulation is scheduled to go into effect two days before the presidential inauguration of Barack Obama,

###

Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Inc. is a private, nonprofit family planning agency that respects and protects the rights of each man and woman to make informed reproductive decisions. Our mission is to provide accessible, high-quality health care and information to clients and to serve as advocate and educator to the community on responsible human sexuality. We have offices in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.