

public affairs update

Economic Stimulus Package Passed With Investments in Health Without Designated Funding for STI Screening

After great debate, the country now has a plan that will ideally help pull ourselves out of the recession everyone is facing. Congress has passed the American Economic Recovery Reinvestment Act, also referred to as the economic stimulus package. While many items included in the package are key to the country's recovery, Planned Parenthood focused on key provisions that would help to keep the country's population healthy and ensure access to healthcare services for all Americans.

Planned Parenthood was specifically advocating for a provision that would provide funding for STI prevention and screening. While the final package includes \$1 billion for prevention and wellness, there is no earmark for STI Screening and Prevention. Since both the Senate and House bills originally included funding provisions for STI Screening and Prevention, Planned Parenthood is hopeful that a large portion of the \$1 Billion for prevention and wellness will in fact be put to use for STI Screening and prevention.

STI Screening and prevention was not the only piece of the package that Planned Parenthood was tracking. Another top priority, the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver, would give states the ability to expand family planning coverage to low income women under Medicaid. Unfortunately, that provision was removed early on in the debate.

March 2009

www.ppsp.org

Upcoming Events: Mark your Calendars!

- Phone Bank: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
March 4th - 5:30-8:00pm
- International Women's Day Celebration
March 8th - begins at Noon at City Hall, Philadelphia
- Volunteer Night: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
March 18th - 5:00-7:30pm
- Movie Nite: A Hollywood Glamour Prom
March 28th, 8:00pm-Midnight
- Lobby Day in Harrisburg
March 31st, 7:00am-6:00pm

To RSVP or for more information about these or other PPSp events, contact the External Affairs Department at: 215.351.5585 or by email at: externalaffairs@ppsp.org

call 215.351.5585
visit www.ppsp.org

 **Planned Parenthood**[®]
Southeastern Pennsylvania

public affairs update cont.

Guttmacher Institute Releases Study Showing Cost-Savings Associated with Publicly Funded Family Planning Services

During a time when family planning funding is consistently under attack, Guttmacher Institute released a report this week stating that “1.94 million unintended pregnancies and 810,000 abortions are prevented each year by publicly funded family planning centers.” The report also outlined the cost-savings associated with expanding Medicaid Services to more low-income women – it works out to \$4 saved for every \$1 invested. According to Guttmacher’s press release, without publicly funded family planning services, the abortion rate in the United States “would be nearly two-thirds higher than it currently is, and nearly twice as high among poor women.”

This report was released just weeks after Congress eliminated the Medicaid Family Planning State Option from the economic stimulus package. The Medicaid Family Planning State Option would simply allow states to expand their Medicaid family planning services, including cancer screenings and other preventive care, to more women in need, without having to go through the burdensome Medicaid waiver process.

Currently 27 states have sought and received federal waivers to extend coverage for family planning services. Each of these states has demonstrated that doing so expands health care coverage to more women while resulting in significant cost savings. The Guttmacher report recommends that Congress eliminate the waiver requirement and instead, states should be allowed to use the same income criteria to determine eligibility for family planning under Medicaid that they use to determine eligibility for pregnancy-related care.

Restrictive Abortion Law Expected to Ease in Spain

According to an Associated Press article, in a step to ease restrictive abortion laws in Spain, a parliamentary committee released a report recommending that early stage abortions be legalized by the government. While their report detailed their recommendation that “early term abortion should be allowed without condition,” it did not specify when restrictions should be imposed. Currently, abortion is considered a crime in the country while it is still available. The availability is dependent on a woman obtaining a “doctor’s certification” that their physical or mental health is in danger if they continued their pregnancy. In a country where more than 100,000 abortions were performed in 2008, this move by the government to recommend a looser abortion law is just one in many recent clashes with Catholic clergy and conservatives throughout the country.