

The Honorable Secretary Alex Azar
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20204

June 5, 2018

Dear Secretary Azar,

We, the undersigned mayors, lead over 75 cities across the United States, representing big cities as well as rural areas and more than 32 million Americans. We write on behalf of these communities and families to express our vehement opposition to the implementation of a domestic “gag rule” on the Title X family planning program. By prohibiting health care providers in the program from referring their patients for abortion, this policy would deny people the information they need to make their own informed health care decisions. On top of banning information on abortion, the domestic gag rule is also designed to make it impossible for Planned Parenthood health centers and other specialized reproductive health care providers to serve patients in the program, which would mean patients in communities across the country would lose access to basic health care. The gag rule would have a devastating impact on women and families in our communities.

Title X is the nation’s only program dedicated to providing affordable birth control and reproductive health care to people with low incomes or who are otherwise underserved. Every year, more than four million women, men, and young people go to Title X-funded health centers for basic, confidential preventive health care, including cancer screenings, birth control, sexually transmitted infection (STI) screenings, pregnancy testing, and annual exams.

Forty-one percent of people who receive care under Title X are served at Planned Parenthood health centers. Planned Parenthood is one of the largest providers of high-quality reproductive health care in the United States. An estimated one in five women in this country relies on Planned Parenthood in her lifetime. Planned Parenthood provides comprehensive family planning, cervical and breast cancer screenings, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and annual exams. Nearly 2.4 million women, men, and young people rely on Planned Parenthood, more than one third of whom are people of color. Because of the role Planned Parenthood plays in communities across the country, and because of the role it has played in the lives of millions of Americans, people overwhelmingly support Planned Parenthood and strongly oppose efforts to prevent patients from accessing accurate medical information at its health centers.

Making it impossible for Planned Parenthood to keep seeing Title X patients and preventing all Title X-funded providers from offering critical information to patients would have serious

consequences and an extraordinarily harmful impact on communities in our cities and across the nation. The reality is that if this blatant administrative attack on reproductive health is implemented, millions of people will lose access to health care and be unaware of the services available to them — some of those services are lifesaving. That is why mayors are standing in support of health care access for all people, and urging you to cease any plans to implement a gag rule that would deny preventive care and access to information to guide optimal health care decisions for millions of Americans.

No one knows better than mayors how devastating it would be to take away access to health care and information from the people that we are honored to represent. If all Title X patients are blocked from receiving the full scope of medical information, it would be an attack on the well-being and economic security of those who already face barriers to accessing health care and need it most. People go to Planned Parenthood and other Title X centers because they know they will find health care professionals who are compassionate experts dedicated to reproductive and preventive health care. We know our communities, and we know they rely on the trusted care provided through the Title X program. It would be nothing short of disastrous for the millions of people who access care through the Title X program to lose access to the providers that they trust and to the expert information that directly impacts their bodies and lives. We urge you to withdraw the rule and not move forward with this harmful policy and instead put the lives and health of people in this country first and foremost.

Sincerely,

Mayor Coral J. Evans, City of Flagstaff, AZ

Mayor Greg Stanton, City of Phoenix, AZ

Mayor Jonathan Rothschild, City of Tucson, AZ

Mayor Chris Canning, City of Calistoga, CA

Mayor Mary Casillas Salas, City of Chula Vista, CA

Mayor Steven A. Hernandez, City of Coachella, CA

Mayor Andre Quintero, City of El Monte, CA

Mayor Robert Garcia, City of Long Beach, CA

Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles, CA

Mayor Jill Techel, City of Napa, CA

Mayor Libby Schaaf, City of Oakland, CA

Mayor Michael M. Vargas, City of Perris, CA

Mayor Darrell Steinberg, City of Sacramento, CA

Mayor Alan Galbraith, City of Saint Helena, CA
Mayor Mark Farrell, City of San Francisco, CA
Mayor Sam Liccardo, City of San Jose, CA
Mayor Miguel Pulido, City of Santa Ana, CA
Mayor Michael Tubbs, City of Stockton, CA
Mayor John Heilman, City of West Hollywood, CA
Mayor Luke A. Bronin, City of Hartford, CT
Mayor Toni N. Harp, City of New Haven, CT
Mayor Muriel Bowser, City of Washington, DC
Mayor Polly Sierer, City of Newark, DE
Mayor Michael S. Purzycki, City of Wilmington, DE
Mayor Buddy Dyer, City of Orlando, FL
Mayor Andrew D. Gillum, City of Tallahassee, FL
Mayor John Hamilton, City of Bloomington, IN
Mayor LaToya Cantrell, City of New Orleans, LA
Mayor Martin J. Walsh, City of Boston, MA
Mayor Edward M. Estes, City of Glenarden, MD
Mayor Jacob Frey, City of Minneapolis, MN
Mayor Melvin Carter, City of Saint Paul, MN
Mayor Lyda Krewson, City of St Louis, MO
Mayor Esther E. Manheimer , City of Asheville, NC
Mayor Pam Hemminger, City of Chapel Hill, NC
Mayor Steve Schewel, City of Durham, NC
Mayor Eulis A. Willis, City of Navassa, NC
Mayor Joyce Craig, City of Manchester, NH
Mayor Ravi S. Bhalla, City of Hoboken, NJ
Mayor Steven Fulop, City of Jersey City, NJ
Mayor Timothy P. Dougherty, City of Morristown, NJ
Mayor Ras J. Baraka, City of Newark, NJ
Mayor Bill de Blasio, City of New York, NY

Mayor Steve Patterson, City of Athens, OH
Mayor Nan Whaley, City of Dayton, OH
Mayor John Stromberg, City of Ashland, OR
Mayor Lucy Vinis, City of Eugene, OR
Mayor Chuck Bennett, City of Salem, OR
Mayor Dwan B Walker, City of Aliquippa, PA
Mayor Jeanne Sorg, City of Ambler, PA
Mayor Emily Marburger, City of Bellevue, PA
Mayor John Fetterman, City of Braddock, PA
Mayor Aidsand F Wright-Riggins, City of Collegeville, PA
Mayor Ron Strouse, City of Doylestown, PA
Mayor Eric Papenfuse, City of Harrisburg, PA
Mayor Nancy Guenst, City of Hatboro, PA
Mayor Brian Spoales, City of Millvale, PA
Mayor Jim Kenney, City of Philadelphia, PA
Mayor Bill Peduto, City of Pittsburgh, PA
Mayor Stephanie A. Henrick, City of Pottstown, PA
Mayor Matthew V. Rudzki, City of Sharpsburg, PA
Mayor Tarah Probst, City of Stroudsburg, PA
Mayor Tim Kearney, City of Swarthmore, PA
Mayor Kelley Kelley, City of Turtle Creek, PA
Mayor William A. Dennon, City of Upland Borough, PA
Mayor Dianne Herrin, City of West Chester, PA
Mayor Marita Garrett, City of Wilkinsburg, PA
Mayor Steve Adler, City of Austin, TX
Mayor Mike Rawlings, City of Dallas, TX
Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston, TX
Mayor McKinley L. Price, DDS, City of Newport News, VA
Mayor Levar M. Stoney, City of Richmond, VA
Mayor Kelli Linville, City of Bellingham, WA

Mayor Cassie Franklin, City of Everett, WA

Mayor Amy Walen, City of Kirkland, WA

Mayor Andy Ryder, City of Lacey, WA

Mayor Jennifer Gregerson, City of Mukilteo, WA

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, City of Seattle, WA

Mayor Will Hall, City of Shoreline, WA

Mayor Jackie Biskupski, City of Salt Lake City, UT