

March 14, 2011

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
S-221, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Speaker John Boehner
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
S-230, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi
H-204, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senate Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Boehner, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, and House Minority Leader Pelosi:

As organizations representing health care professionals who provide preventive and family planning care and patient advocates representing individuals who receive services at Planned Parenthood, we are writing to oppose the Pence Amendment that was adopted as part of HR 1. This provision bars federal funding from going to Planned Parenthood clinics, including Medicaid funds, Title X funds, CDC HIV and STI funding, maternal and child health funding, and funding for breast and cervical cancer screening. We also oppose any other provisions that seek to restrict access to family planning services.

Any proposal to exclude Planned Parenthood from federal public health funding will hurt millions of American women's access to family planning, HIV testing and counseling, and breast and cervical cancer screening. Over 90% of the care their clinics offer is preventive. Every year clinics do one million cervical cancer screenings and 830,000 breast exams, provide contraception to nearly 2.5 million patients and provide nearly four million tests and treatments for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. These services improve women's health, lower the rate of unintended pregnancies, and decrease infant mortality.

48% (approximately 1.4 million) of Planned Parenthood's patients are on Medicaid, and as a direct result of the Pence amendment, they would lose access to their health care provider. Planned Parenthood also sees one third of all women accessing preventive services through the Title X program (1.6 million women a year). In some states, Planned Parenthood is the only Title X provider.

Since the law already requires health care providers to demonstrate that federal funds are not used for abortion, the Pence amendment would only serve to cut funding for preventive care, including cancer screenings and contraception at Planned Parenthood health centers. We urge you to recognize the important role that Planned Parenthood health centers play in the lives of millions of American women and men, and oppose any efforts to strip funding of these centers. If you have any questions, please contact Nevena Minor, ACOG Manager of Government Affairs at 202-314-2322 or nminor@acog.org.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American College of Nurse Mid-Wives
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Nurses Association
American Public Health Association
American Social Health Association
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals

Doctors for America
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Social Workers
National Coalition of STD Directors
National Medical Association
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health