



June 18, 2019

The Honorable Diana DeGette
Chair, House Energy and Commerce
Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Ranking Member, House Energy and
Commerce, Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairperson DeGette and Ranking Member Guthrie:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 134,600 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write to share the organization's comments for the hearing, *Protecting Title X and Safeguarding Quality Family Planning Care*.

The Title X Family Planning program supports essential preventive health care for four million individuals each year through access to breast exams, cervical cancer screenings, sexually transmitted infection tests, family planning, and other basic services. These services are consistent with health care that family physicians and other primary care physicians provide and support our goal to encourage patient decision making and prevent chronic diseases. Clinically appropriate sexual and reproductive health care can also make a lasting difference in people's lives as [evidenced](#) by the state of Colorado's Family Planning Initiative. By providing access to long-acting reversible contraception and health education, the birth and abortion rates dropped by 50% for those 15 to 19 years of age. The program also resulted in reduced social services spending by an estimated \$70 million. Most importantly, Colorado youth increased their educational and job attainment.

The AAFP has consistently supported full federal funding for Title X and opposed regulations that threaten patient care. In a 2018 [letter](#) to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sent in response to a proposal to revise the Title X regulations, the AAFP stated concern that the regulation would limit patient access to medically accurate information and availability of the full range of health care options. We continue to maintain that evidence-based federal programs, including Title X and the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP), should receive continued federal funding and evidence-based program requirements should be preserved. These and other federal programs must continue to provide non-directive, comprehensive, medically accurate information.

The AAFP continues to support coverage for all Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved methods of contraception and strongly urges HHS to include all forms of FDA-approved contraceptives within that coverage. At present, the proposal to revise Title X has been halted by the courts. If finalized, the rule threatens women's lives by restricting access to medically accurate, preventative health care and putting more than 40 percent of Title X patients at risk of

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losing essential care. The proposed rule would also exclude certain forms of FDA-approved contraceptives and remove the requirement that contraceptive methods provided by Title X grantees be “medically approved,” and restrict access to safe and effective contraception.

The AAFP is pleased that the *Affordable Care Act* included comprehensive reproductive care as part of preventive services available at no cost sharing, and we believe that those same services should be available for individuals who do not have employer-based or market-based insurance. For that reason, the AAFP strongly supports Medicaid’s “any willing provider” and “freedom of choice” protections. In a joint [statement](#) with other front line medical societies, the AAFP has encouraged the Administration to promote patient-centered health care access without provider discrimination.

Again, the AAFP maintains that clinically appropriate sexual and reproductive health care are essential for prevention and lifelong health. We welcome the opportunity to strengthen the Title X program and to ensure its services are available to those who need them. For more information, please contact Sonya Clay, Government Relations Representative, at 202-232-9033 or sclay@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Munger MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a stylized "M" at the end.

Michael L. Munger, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

About Family Medicine

Family physicians conduct approximately one in five of the total medical office visits in the United States per year—more than any other specialty. Family physicians provide comprehensive, evidence-based, and cost-effective care dedicated to improving the health of patients, families, and communities. Family medicine’s cornerstone is an ongoing and personal patient-physician relationship where the family physician serves as the hub of each patient’s integrated care team. More Americans depend on family physicians than on any other medical specialty.