



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

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CONTACT: Paloma Zuleta  
202-812-4477  
[pzuleta@powertodecide.org](mailto:pzuleta@powertodecide.org)

## DOMESTIC GAG RULE REDUCES CONTRACEPTIVE ACCESS FOR OVER 16,000 WOMEN LIVING IN WEST VIRGINIA

(Washington, D.C.) —According to data released by [Power to Decide](#), an estimated [16,280 West Virginia women](#) of reproductive age (13-44) in need of publicly funded contraception live in counties impacted by the Title X Family Planning Program “domestic gag rule.” In addition, 4% (2) of West Virginia’s 55 counties have lost some or all their Title X resources.

The [domestic gag rule](#) prohibits health providers receiving Title X funds from providing comprehensive options counseling to patients, by requiring health providers to withhold some information from patients about abortion services and care. In addition, health centers are required to cease providing abortion care with non-Title X funds at sites that offer Title X supported services, such as contraceptive care, breast and cervical cancer screening and STI testing. The rule requires that abortion services, no matter how they are funded, be performed at a separate physical site, which is impossible for many health centers. In the face of these challenges, family planning providers are doing their best to provide high-quality service to their patients and fill gaps left in the wake of the disruption caused by the rule.

“Over 16,000 women in need in West Virginia could be impacted by the domestic gag rule,” Raegan McDonald-Mosley, MD, MPH, CEO of Power to Decide. “The federal rule is yet another obstacle for more than [65,000 women with low incomes](#) in West Virginia who live in contraceptive deserts and face barriers such as transportation, child care and taking unpaid time off from work in order to access basic health care.”

Data from [Power to Decide](#) shows 65,530 women living at or below 250% of the poverty level in West Virginia live in contraceptive deserts, counties in which there is not reasonable access to a health center offering the full range of contraceptive methods. Out of those women, 22,190 live in counties without a single health center that provides the full range of contraceptive methods. Nationally, more than 19 million U.S. women of low income live in [contraceptive deserts](#).

In this challenging landscape, states like West Virginia can take proactive steps to expand access to contraception in various ways. West Virginia has already expanded Medicaid to low-income adults, which helps decrease the percentage of uninsured women, and by extension, give them contraceptive coverage they need to live healthy lives. In addition, West Virginia requires insurance to cover an extended supply of prescription contraception and allows pharmacists to prescribe contraception. West Virginia can also guard against additional barriers to access by enacting policies that protect contraceptive coverage. More information about these policies can be found [here](#).

**Power to Decide** is a private, non-partisan, non-profit organization that works to ensure all people—no matter who they are, where they live, or what their economic status might be—have the power to decide if, when, and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. Please visit us at [www.PowerToDecide.org](http://www.PowerToDecide.org) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).