



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ALLOWS TEXAS TO BLOCK LOW INCOME WOMEN'S ACCESS TO QUALITY FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

Unprecedented Move by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Further Erodes Women's Access

(Washington, D.C.) — Yesterday, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved a waiver submitted by Texas which will in effect, severely limit women's access to family planning services. Specifically, women on the Healthy Texas Women Program (which allows women to receive Medicaid coverage solely for family planning care) are prohibited from receiving services from any provider which also provides abortion care. Yesterday's decision means the state can now receive 90% of the funding for the Healthy Texas Women Program from the federal government, despite continuing to block women's access to care.

“By granting this waiver, the federal government has allowed Texas to deny women already struggling to make ends meet access to birth control, cancer screenings and other critical family planning services they need to stay healthy,” said Ginny Ehrlich, CEO, Power to Decide. “We are also concerned that other states will follow Texas' approach, resulting in even more women losing access to critically needed family planning care,” said Ehrlich.

The concerns are real and supported by the data. In 2011, Texas submitted a waiver application announcing its intention to block women from using their Medicaid-funded Healthy Texas Women Program coverage at clinics that also provided abortion care. The waiver was denied but the state moved forward without the federal funds. According to the research, nearly [45,000 fewer women](#) received birth control, cancer screenings and other services through the program. The waiver granted yesterday allows the state to use federal money to continue to deny women of low income access to quality health providers.

More than [1.7 million Texas women](#) in need of publicly funded family planning already live in counties where they lack reasonable access to a clinic offering the full range of birth control methods. The CMS approved waiver will only result in more Texas women living in contraceptive deserts.

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 or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.