



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

March 31, 2020

CONTACT: Paloma Zuleta
202-812-4477
pzuleta@powertodecide.org

1.2 MILLION WOMEN IN FLORIDA LIVE IN CONTRACEPTIVE DESERTS

(Washington, D.C.) — According to data released by [Power to Decide](#), an [estimated 1,193,360 women](#) living at or below 250% of the poverty level in Florida live in contraceptive deserts, counties in which there is not reasonable access to a health center offering the full range of contraceptive methods. Currently, across the country more than 19 million U.S. women of low income live in [contraceptive deserts](#).

“Nearly 1.2 million women in Florida face tremendous barriers to accessing contraception they need and deserve,” said Ginny Ehrlich, CEO, Power to Decide. “This is unacceptable and stands in the way of these women’s power to decide if, when and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. Because access to contraception is limited in many parts of Florida, women who are already struggling to make ends meet are burdened with additional costs to access basic health care. When the only clinics available to them are far from home, many of these women face untenable decisions, like whether to use their limited transportation dollars to get to work or to the clinic, how they will pay for extra child care hours and if they can afford to take time off work.”

Women in Florida are also far less likely to have health coverage than women in other parts of the country, which limits their ability to access reproductive health services, including contraceptive services. In Florida, [18%](#) of women of reproductive age (13-44) are uninsured, as compared to 11.7% of their peers nationally.

“The implementation of the Title X Family Planning Program domestic gag rule made things even worse for women struggling to make ends meet in Florida. The domestic gag rule has led to a loss of funds to support vital health services, including contraceptive services in Hillsborough County, making it harder for an estimated 90,000 women in need to access contraceptive services and supplies,” said Ehrlich.

The [domestic gag rule](#) requires health providers receiving Title X funds to withhold 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 this challenging landscape, states like Florida can take proactive steps to partially alleviate the impact of damaging federal policies and to expand access to contraception in various ways. Expanding

Medicaid to childless adults would help decrease the percentage of uninsured women, and by extension, give them contraceptive coverage. In addition, allowing pharmacists to prescribe contraception, and requiring insurance to cover an extended supply of prescription contraceptives can make it easier to access some contraceptive methods. Florida can also guard against additional barriers to access by enacting policies that protect insurance coverage of the full range of contraceptive methods. 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 or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.