



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

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DOMESTIC GAG RULE REDUCES BIRTH CONTROL ACCESS FOR OVER 45,000 WOMEN LIVING IN RHODE ISLAND

(Washington, D.C.) — Data released by [Power to Decide](#) estimate that [45,290 Rhode Island women](#) of reproductive age (13-44) in need of publicly funded contraception live in a county impacted by the Title X Family Planning Program “domestic gag rule.”

The [domestic gag rule](#) requires health providers receiving Title X funds 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.

“The implementation of the domestic gag rule could impact over 45,000 women in need in Rhode Island,” said Gillian Sealy, CEO, Power to Decide. “This federal rule exacerbates an already challenging contraceptive access landscape for women struggling to make ends meet. Even before the domestic gag rule went into effect, more than 64,000 low-income women in Rhode Island lived in contraceptive deserts, counties in which there is not reasonable access to the full range of contraceptive methods. As a result, these women face financial barriers related to transportation, childcare and taking unpaid time from work; costs they incur just to get the contraception they need.”

Data from Power to Decide show that [64,190 women](#) living at or below 250% of the poverty level in Rhode Island live in contraceptive deserts, counties in which there is not reasonable access to a health center offering the full range of contraceptive methods. Of the 64,190 women in need, 2,310 live in counties without a single health center that provides the full range of methods. Nationally, more than 19 million U.S. women of low income live in [contraceptive deserts](#).

In this challenging landscape, Rhode Island is taking steps to partially alleviate the impact of damaging federal policies and proactively expanding access to contraception in various ways. Rhode Island has already expanded Medicaid to adults with low-income, which helps decrease the percentage of uninsured women, and by extension, give them contraceptive coverage they need to live healthy lives. Further, Rhode Island has enacted state policies that extend the supply of prescription contraceptives. In addition, the Rhode Island legislature is considering bills to allow pharmacists to prescribe contraception and to protect insurance coverage of the full range of contraceptive methods, both of which would help expand access for more women. To further expand access, Rhode Island could allow pharmacists to prescribe contraception. 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.