



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

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AS THE DOMESTIC GAG RULE IS CHALLENGED IN THE COURTS; MILLIONS STRIPPED OF ACCESS TO QUALITY FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

(Washington, D.C.) — Today, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals stayed a preliminary injunction that had blocked the [final rule governing the Title X Family Planning Program from going into effect](#). As a result of the Ninth Circuit decision, health providers at sites that receive Title X funds will be required to withhold information about abortion and are banned from referring for abortion, even when a pregnant woman asks for her options. Today's decision also prohibits clinics that offer high-quality, affordable contraceptive services from receiving Title X funding, if they also offer abortion services.

The changes to the Title X Family Planning Program will take effect as the rule, which is also referred to as the “domestic gag rule,” is being challenged in the courts.

In response, Ginny Ehrlich, CEO, Power to Decide issued the following statement:

“Today’s decision allows changes to the Title X family planning program that are catastrophic to women’s ability to access high-quality reproductive health care and violate the ethics of sound medical practice. It hurts marginalized communities, as millions of women already lack access to the full spectrum of reproductive health services. Right now, there are [19.5 million women in need of publicly funded contraception who live in “contraceptive deserts”](#) – counties without reasonable access to the full range of contraceptive methods. Implementation of this rule will only exacerbate these access challenges.

“The devastating impact of today’s decision will be immediate. For one, it is likely that the “domestic gag rule” will undermine the integrity of the Title X program by replacing quality health care providers that offer services including the full range of contraceptive options and STI testing with entities that offer only counseling on abstinence and the rhythm method. If all of the current high-quality Title X centers are forced out of the program, then our research shows that the number of women in need of publicly funded contraception who live in counties [without a single health center that offers the full range of methods will nearly triple](#).

“Today’s decision will undermine trust between providers and their patients, as a result of providers’ lack of ability to provide comprehensive information and services. This rule will leave millions of people with low incomes without the access to the quality health care they need and depend on. It is for this reason that more than 19 medical associations, including the American Medical Association, oppose this rule, noting that it violates the AMA’s code of medical ethics.

"As the rule moves through the courts, we will continue our efforts to fight for access to the full spectrum of reproductive health services. Such access is critical to help ensure all people have the power to decide if, when and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child."

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.