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AND TECHNOLOGY

October 7, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell:

We are writing in strong support of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) recent proposed updates to the Title X family planning program, "*Compliance with Title X Requirements by Project Recipients in Selecting Subrecipients*." The proposed regulations would clarify and reinforce the longstanding requirement that health care providers may not be excluded from the program for reasons unrelated to their qualifications to perform Title X-funded services. This update is critical to ensure low-income individuals have access to high-quality family planning and related preventive health services.

The Title X family planning program is a vital source of family planning and related preventive care for low-income, uninsured, and young people across the country. Title X is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with high-quality family planning and related preventive health services. Last year, Title X's network of health care providers served more than 4 million women, men, and young people with family planning and other preventive health care services including Pap tests, breast exams, HIV testing, and contraception.<sup>1</sup>

In recent months state attacks on women's access to providers under Title X and other federal programs have intensified dramatically. Politically motivated lawmakers in at least 24 states have attempted to block family planning providers from furnishing publicly funded care in the past year alone. To date, at least 14 states have taken official action to target and exclude otherwise eligible providers from the Title X program specifically.<sup>2</sup> Left unchecked, these state attacks have a devastating impact on women's ability to access their trusted providers. Title X has been long understood to bar these types of actions within the program. The proposed rule clarifies this protection in order to remind grantees of the program's existing requirements, as well as to safeguard access to Title X services for low-income individuals.

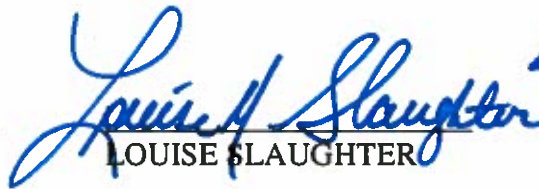
<sup>1</sup> Fowler, C. I., Gable, J., Wang, J., & Lasater, B. (2016, August). Family Planning Annual Report: 2015 national summary. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International.


<sup>2</sup> E.g., AZ, AR, CO, FL, IN, KS, MI, NH, NC, OH, OK, TN, TX, WI.

We appreciate HHS's work to advance this important rule that will protect access to critical family planning services for people around the country and strengthen the Title X program. It is critical that we continue to support preventative programs like Title X that improves and invests in our nation's health. We urge you to finalize this rule as quickly as possible and we look forward to working with you to ensure the continued success of this vital program.

Sincerely,

  
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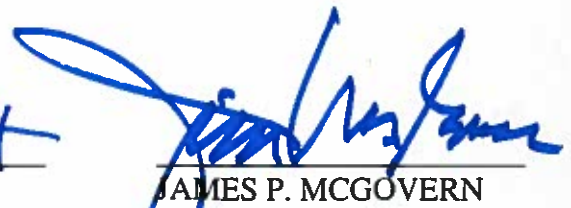
  
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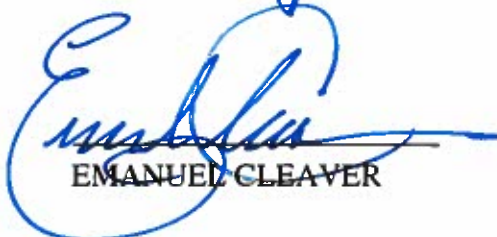
  
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