



STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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SARA GIDEON
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

**Testimony of Speaker Sara Gideon
In Support of LD 1613
An Act Regarding Women's Health and Economic Security
Thursday, February 13, 2020**

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Care Insurance and Financial Services, thank you for welcoming me today. I am Sara Gideon, from Freeport and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. I'm here today to speak in favor of LD 1613 - An Act Regarding Women's Health and Economic Security.

Due to the withdrawal of statewide grantee Maine Family Planning from the Title X/National Family Planning Program over the Domestic Gag Rule, Maine's family planning network faces a funding shortfall of nearly \$2 million. This bill seeks to replace these lost Title X funds with state funds in order to sustain our existing and essential family planning network.

Title X was established in 1970 and is the only federal grant program dedicated solely to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services. As a participant in the program, health care providers commit to providing care to all who need it, regardless of ability to pay. Almost half of the patients who receive Title X services are at 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and three quarters are below 200 percent of the FPL.

In Maine, Title X supported a network of reproductive and sexual health care providers in the state including Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, Maine Family Planning and some federally qualified health centers. 50 locations across the state, rural to urban, served more than 23,000 patients each year, providing contraceptive counseling and supplies, STI testing and treatment, cancer screenings, wellness exams, pregnancy tests and comprehensive options counseling, and other essential health services.

This care empowers Mainers to build the lives and families they envision, to decide when and whether to become a parent, and to pursue educational and career goals on their own timelines. And for many of these patients, at a critical time in their lives, it is the only health care they receive.

Data clearly shows that family planning health centers can be patients' only source of care in underserved communities. In 2016, Title X-funded providers were the sole source of medical care for 60% of their contraceptive clients nationally¹. Here in Maine, many of these 50 locations fall in locations that are federally recognized as Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas/Populations (MUA/Ps)². These areas have been determined to have a critical shortage of primary care, dental care, and/or mental health care providers.

To put that technical language into less complicated terms, for many of the 23,000 patients this is the only health care provider they will see. Their clinics are located in parts of our state that already lack doctors and nurses or where an hour drive is the norm to get to an appointment, not the exception. If we fail to support this network, the impact will be felt disproportionately by the very rural communities and Mainers that already face significant health care challenges.

In February 2019, the federal Office of Population Affairs within the Department of Health and Human Services announced a set of changes to Title X known collectively as the Domestic Gag Rule. The rules prohibited organizations like Maine Family Planning and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England from providing abortion services and federally funded family planning services at the same location, imposing cost-prohibitive physical separation requirements; strictly curtailed counseling on and referrals to abortion services by Title X-funded providers; and eliminated current requirements that Title X sites offer a full range of medically approved family planning methods and non-directive pregnancy options counseling that includes information about prenatal care/delivery, adoption, and abortion.

In doing so, the federal government inserts itself into a medical conversation that otherwise would and should only involve a patient and their provider. Continuing to accept these Title X funds would have prevented these health care providers from doing their jobs and providing ethical, evidenced based care. As a result, they are left with a significant financial shortfall.

Every Mainer, regardless of income or where they live, should have access to comprehensive, high-quality, and affordable sexual and reproductive health care from an expert family planning provider in their community. This bill will ensure that this network can continue to provide these vital services.

I am sure there are others that will follow me today that can dive into further details, but I'd be pleased to answer any questions you may have. I'm confident the committee will consider these matters carefully and I respectfully ask that you support LD 1613 and swiftly move its passage.

¹ https://www.nationalfamilyplanning.org/title-x_title-x-key-facts

² <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/public-health-systems/rhpc/hpsa.shtml>

Proposed Sponsor's Amendment:

An Act To Ensure Access to Women's Health and Economic Security

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §1912 is enacted to read:

§1912. Continued access to family planning services

1. Access to services. In accordance with this chapter, the department shall provide funding to ensure continued access to family planning services. The department shall issue a request for proposals from qualified providers of family planning services, as defined in section 1902, subsection 4. The department shall select one provider to provide management and oversight of the delivery of family planning services in this State, including, but not limited to, the coordination and management of any sub-recipients, and shall distribute the funds appropriated for that purpose.

2. Grant. The department shall make the funds available in the form of a grant and may not distribute any funds appropriated pursuant to this section under a fee for service format.

3. Fund established. The Fund to Ensure Access to Family Planning Services is established as a dedicated, nonlapsing fund within the department. The department may accept funds from any public or private source for the purposes of awarding a grant under this subsection. Any funds appropriated may not supplant other sources of funding.

Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations. That the following appropriations and allocations are made.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF

Fund to Ensure Access to Family Planning Services N339

Initiative: Provides on-going funds to be distributed to a single grantee who will provide management and oversight of the delivery of family planning services.

GENERAL FUND	2019-20	2020-21
All Other	\$0	\$2,035,670
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$2,035,670

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF		
DEPARTMENT TOTALS	2019-20	2020-21
GENERAL FUND	\$0	\$3,053,505

DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$0	\$3,053,505
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Sec. 3. Funding for family planning services; replacement of Federal Title X funds.
 The Department of Health and Human Services shall distribute the funds appropriated under section 4 of this Act to the former recipient of Federal Title X funds for the State to replace funding for the management and oversight of the delivery of family planning services for the period beginning January 1, 2020 through June 30, 2020. The department must make the funds available in the form of a grant and may not distribute funds appropriated pursuant to this section under a fee for service format.

Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations. That the following appropriations and allocations are made.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF

Fund to Ensure Access to Family Planning Services N339

Initiative: Provides one-time funds for distribution to the former recipient of Federal Title X funds for their management and oversight of the delivery of family planning services statewide for the period beginning January 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2020.

GENERAL FUND	2019-20	2020-21
All Other	\$0	\$1,017,835
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$1,017,835

SUMMARY

This bill provides on-going appropriations totaling \$2,035,670 annually from the General Fund for family planning services. The act directs the Maine Department of Health and Human Services to annually distribute \$2,035,670 to a single grantee who will provide management and oversight of the delivery of family planning services. The bill also provides one-time funds of \$1,017,835 to the former recipient of Federal Title X funds for the State for the period beginning January 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2020.