

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON TITLE X

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### What is the purpose of Title X?

The purpose of Title X is simple: the provision of contraceptive services and information in order to lower the incidence of unintended pregnancy, to improve maternal health by doing so, and to prevent recourse to abortion. That was its original purpose, and that is still its purpose today.

### How long has the program been in effect?

The Family Planning Services and Population Research Act, Title X of the Public Health Service Act (PHSA) was signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1970. It has been reauthorized several times since then, but has remained essentially the same.

### How is Title X administered?

Family planning services under Title X are administered by the Office of Population Affairs (OPA), under the auspices of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Funds authorized and appropriated by Congress are turned over to DImS which, through its 10 regional offices, generally makes grant awards to state health departments or regional "umbrella" agencies such as the Wyoming Reproductive Health Council (non-governmental family planning councils) which, in turn, subcontract with local agencies. There are 89 district grantees, including 44 state agencies. Each primary grantee is, by law, responsible for providing a broad range of family planning services in its area.

### What services does Title X provide?

Title X authorizes project grants to public and private nonprofit organizations for the provision of family planning services (including natural family planning and infertility services) to all who need and want them, with priority given to low-income women and teens. BY LAW, NO ABORTIONS MAY BE PROVIDED WITH TITLE X FUNDS. In addition, Title X provides for a training program for clinic personnel, limited community-based education activities and strict evaluation requirements to ensure program accountability. Finally, Title X contains an authorization for research in the demographic and behavioral sciences. However, funding for that program is provided under the general authority of the National Institutes for Health.

Who is served by Title X?

The typical client is young, has a low or marginal income and does not yet have children. 69 are white, and 8 of 10 have incomes below 150 of the poverty level. Patients who can afford to pay are charged fees in accordance with federal regulations.

Who actually receives Title X funds? Isn't Title X a "Planned Parenthood" program?

A network of 2,504 agencies operates family planning clinics at more than 5,000 service sites across the country. State and local health departments serve 40 of these clients; local Planned Parenthood organizations serve 27; hospitals 13; and a variety of other agencies such as HMO's neighborhood health centers and free clinics serve 20. Local Planned Parenthood organizations together receive about \$30 million of the total \$142.5 million Title X appropriations, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America, with which local Planned Parenthood organizations are affiliated, receives no. Title X service dollars.

Don't other programs support family planning?

Title X is the only federal program specifically targeted for family planning. Its funds are allocated throughout the country each year on the basis of need. Other sources of support include 2 Block Grant programs, Title V of the Social Security Act (Maternal and Child Health) and Title XX of the Social Security Act (Social Services); and Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid), which reimburses private physicians and clinics for family planning services, mainly for welfare recipients. Decreased funding for federal programs since 1980 has been only partially offset by an increase in the proportion of total income contributed by the state and local governments and by private sources, particularly client fees. The result has been higher dependence on fees, a discontinuation of some services, and reductions in the number of clinic sites.

Are Title X funds used for abortions or for lobbying?

Family planning clinics have always been prohibited from using Title X funds for abortions or for lobbying purposes. Allegations of noncompliance in these areas led to a Congressionally-requested investigation by the General Accounting Office (GAO) as well as simultaneous examination of the same issues by the DHHS Office of the Inspector General. Both reported in September of 1983 that all Title X clinics studied were operating in full compliance with the law. In testimony before the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment in both 1984 and 1985, DHHS specifically reaffirmed that clinics were in full compliance with the prohibition.

How effective has the program been in actually preventing unintended pregnancies?

Not only has there been a marked increase in the use of effective contraceptive methods among low-income women and sexually active teenagers since the initiation of the federal family planning effort, but a comprehensive program evaluation has shown that since the

1970's, millions of unintended births have been averted and that each dollar invested in family planning by government yields a saving of \$4.60 in health and welfare costs alone.

Hasn't the teenage pregnancy rate been rising despite - or perhaps because of - Title X?

Sexual activity among unmarried teenagers has been increasing in the U. S. and elsewhere for several decades, although there is considerable evidence that in many western countries this has not been accompanied by an increase in teenage pregnancy, as it has in the U. S. There is no evidence, moreover, that the availability of contraception has caused this increase. Indeed, the evidence points in the other direction: 88 of teenagers who come to family planning clinics do so only after they have been sexually active, and most wait more than a year after first intercourse. Too many wait until they fear, often correctly, that they are pregnant.

Don't family planning clinics - or at least Planned Parenthood clinics "encourage" abortion?

Family Planning clinics have always been prohibited from using Title X funds for abortion, consistent with the intent of Congress to focus government support on preventive services. However, physicians and health personnel in Title X clinics - as elsewhere - are required to direct their patients to necessary medical or social services they themselves do not provide. Since pregnancy diagnosis and counseling is a mandated Title X service, women specifically seeking information about the management of an unintended pregnancy must be told about all their legal options - in accordance not only with federal regulations but also with medical standards promulgated by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Clinics affiliated with Planned Parenthood do not operate differently in this regard than do other clinics run by state and local health departments, hospitals or other agencies.

What exactly is meant by "counseling and referral" with regard to unintended pregnancy?

Federal guidelines require that women seeking information about their options for dealing with an unintended pregnancy be given non-directive counseling "on the following alternative courses of action, and referral upon request: prenatal care and delivery; infant care, foster care or adoption; pregnancy termination." Coercion of any kind is not only prohibited by law but is counter to the principle of voluntary participation upon which Title X is based.