



February 15, 2017

U.S. Congress
Washington, DC

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association and Trust for America's Health, organizations dedicated to improving the health of all people and communities, we write in strong opposition to H.J.Res. 43 and S.J.Res. 13, which would overturn the recent U.S. Department of Health and Human Services final rule updating the regulations that apply to the Title X Family Planning Program. The rule serves to reaffirm the longstanding requirement that health care providers may not be excluded from participating in Title X for reasons other their ability to provide services.

The Title X Family Planning Program is an important source of family planning and related preventive health services for more than 4 million people, including those living in rural and medically underserved areas. Title X delivers high-quality services to all men, women and adolescents who want and need them, with priority given to low-income individuals. In addition to offering contraceptive methods, education and counseling services, Title X-funded centers provide breast and cervical cancer screenings, and sexually transmitted disease and HIV testing, referral and prevention education. These services are lifesaving to women who often have no other access to health care.

The public health value of these family planning services has been continuously demonstrated over the years. In 2014, Title X services helped prevent over 941,000 unintended pregnancies, about 171,800 of which were among teens, and prevented an estimated 1,176 cases of STD-related infertility. Title X-funded activities also support other key reproductive health outcomes including prevention of invasive cervical cancer and helping women achieve healthy pregnancies that result in positive birth outcomes.

The success of Title X hinges on ensuring that funding is awarded to the most qualified recipients. Restrictions on eligibility, when based on reasons other than ability to provide quality services, have been shown to limit the availability of high quality services and the number of people who receive care. As the only federal grant program dedicated to providing individuals with comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services, it is of upmost importance that these federal resources be used judiciously and be awarded to providers that are best suited to deliver these services. Legislation to overturn the Title X HHS rule will not contribute to reaching the fundamental goals of the Title X program.

We urge you to prioritize the health and well-being of the people who depend on these programs for basic health and preventive services, and oppose legislation to overturn the Title X rule.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Georges C. Benjamin in black ink.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director
American Public Health Association

Handwritten signature of John Auerbach in black ink.

John Auerbach
President and Chief Executive Officer
Trust for America's Health