



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

March 31, 2020

CONTACT: Paloma Zuleta
202-812-4477
pzuleta@powertodecide.org

DOMESTIC GAG RULE REDUCES BIRTH CONTROL ACCESS FOR ALMOST 55,000 WOMEN LIVING IN IOWA

(Washington, D.C.) — Data released by [Power to Decide](#) estimate [54,210 women in Iowa](#) of reproductive age (13-44) in need of publicly funded contraception live in counties losing federal funding for the Title X Family Planning Program as a result of the implementation of the “domestic gag rule.”

The [domestic gag rule](#) requires health providers receiving Title X funds to withhold information from patients about abortion services and care. In addition, health centers are required to cease providing abortion care with non-Title X funds at sites that offer Title X supported services, such as contraceptive care, breast and cervical cancer screening and STI testing. The rule requires that abortion services, no matter how they are funded, be performed at a separate physical site, which is impossible for many health centers.

“The implementation of the domestic gag rule could impact close to 55,000 Iowa women in need of birth control,” said Ginny Ehrlich, CEO, Power to Decide. “This federal rule exacerbates an already challenging contraceptive access landscape for women struggling to make ends meet. Even before the domestic gag rule went in to place, more than 170,000 low-income women in Iowa lived in contraceptive deserts, which are counties without reasonable access to the full range of birth control methods. As a result, these women face untenable barriers to access related to the costs of transportation, child care and taking unpaid time from work to get the contraception they need.”

Data from [Power to Decide](#) show that 173,100 [women living](#) at or below 250% of the poverty level in Iowa live in contraceptive deserts, counties in which there is not reasonable access to a health center offering the full range of contraceptive methods. Nationally, more than 19 million U.S. women of low income live in [contraceptive deserts](#).

In this challenging landscape, states like Iowa can take proactive steps to partially alleviate the impact of damaging federal policies and to expand access to contraception in various ways. Iowa has already expanded Medicaid to low-income adults, which helps decrease the percentage of uninsured women, and by extension, gives them the contraceptive coverage they need to live healthy lives. In addition, other policies that would help include allowing pharmacists to prescribe contraception, requiring insurance to cover an extended supply of prescription contraceptives and enacting policies that protect insurance coverage of the full range of contraceptive methods. To further expand access, Iowa is currently considering legislation that would allow pharmacists to prescribe contraception and

require insurance coverage for an extended supply of prescription contraceptives. More information about these policies can be found [here](#).

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.