



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

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DOMESTIC GAG RULE REDUCES CONTRACEPTIVE ACCESS FOR MORE THAN 630,000 WOMEN LIVING IN ILLINOIS

(Washington, D.C.) — According to data released by [Power to Decide](#), an [estimated 631,470 Illinois women](#) of reproductive age (13-44) in need of publicly funded contraception live in counties impacted by the implementation of the Title X Family Planning Program “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 more than 630,000 women in need in Illinois,” 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 into effect, nearly 781,000 low-income women in Illinois lived in contraceptive deserts, which are counties without reasonable access to the full range of contraceptive methods. As a result, these women incur untenable financial barriers such as transportation, child care and taking unpaid time from work to just to get the contraception they need.”

Data from [Power to Decide](#) show that 780,650 women living at or below 250% of the poverty level in Illinois 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 Illinois can take proactive steps to partially alleviate the impact of damaging federal policies and to proactively expand access to contraception in various ways. Illinois has already expanded Medicaid to low-income adults, which helps decrease the percentage of uninsured women, and by extension, give them contraceptive coverage they need to live healthy lives. In addition, Illinois requires insurance to cover an extended supply of prescription contraceptives and has enacted policy that protects insurance coverage of the full range of contraceptive methods. To further expand access, Illinois is currently considering legislation that would allow pharmacists to prescribe contraception. 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.