



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155-1611

July 30, 2018

The Honorable Alex M. Azar II
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

I am writing to express my deep concern about the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' proposed changes to the Title X Family Planning Program. Since 1971, Title X has funded critical preventive health care for low-income Minnesotans statewide, including breast and cervical cancer screenings, contraception, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. These services are a fundamental part of our state's public health infrastructure and have played an important role in the health of Minnesota families and communities.

Your agency's proposed changes to the Title X program would wrongfully ban funding to any health care provider that provides or even refers patients for safe, legal abortions. This requirement would prohibit providers from sharing a full range of health care information with patients. This "gag rule" interferes with the provider-patient relationship and is a violation of the medical ethics that guide health care providers in our country.

Since the program began in Minnesota 45 years ago, Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota has been the primary direct grantee of federal Title X funds in Minnesota. This organization has used these funds to provide expert, affordable reproductive health care to more than 53,000 Minnesotans each year. However, the changes you are proposing would effectively bar patients from receiving care from Planned Parenthood's statewide network of Title X clinics, half of which are in rural or medically underserved areas of Minnesota.

Title X has served our state and our nation well for more than four decades. I respectfully request that you maintain the integrity of the Title X program and stop these harmful changes that jeopardize critical health care for thousands of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Dayton". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Tina Smith
Congressman Tim Walz
Congressman Jason Lewis
Congressman Erik Paulsen
Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Congressman Keith Ellison
Congressman Tom Emmer
Congressman Collin C. Peterson
Congressman Rick Nolan