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American Academy of Pediatrics



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Maryland Chapter



MACHC  
Mid-Atlantic Association of  
Community Health Centers



TO: The Honorable Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair  
Members, House Health and Government Operations Committee

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: March 8, 2017

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 1083 – *Health – Family Planning Services – Continuity of Care*

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The Maryland State Medical Society, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Mid-Atlantic Association of Community Health Centers, and the Maryland Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 1083.

House Bill 1083 establishes a Family Planning Program in the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to ensure access to the continuity of family planning services in the State that are currently provided through Title X of the Public Health Service Act. The establishment of the Family Planning Program proposed by this legislation will proactively address the potential for federal funding to be withdrawn or severely restricted.

Title X is the only federal program dedicated to the provision of family planning and related preventive health services. Projects funded by Title X grants are required to offer a broad range of acceptable and effective contraceptive methods and related services on a voluntary and confidential basis. Title X services include patient education and counseling; cervical and breast cancer screening; sexually transmitted infection (STI) and HIV prevention education, testing, and referral; and pregnancy diagnosis and counseling. Under federal law, Title X funds may not be used for abortion care.

Title X serves all individuals in need, with a focus on low-income, underinsured/uninsured, hard-to-reach, and/or vulnerable populations who lack access to health care and are at risk of unintended pregnancy. Currently, any public or nonprofit private entity may apply for a Title X grant. DHMH provides family planning services through the Maryland Title X Family Planning Program. This program provides free or sliding scale fee-for-service family planning services to women who are ineligible for Medicaid family planning services through local health departments, community health centers, Planned Parenthood clinics, and other providers.

According to DHMH, Title X prevention efforts reduce unintended pregnancies, reproductive cancers, and STIs. In 2014, Maryland's Title X program was estimated to have prevented 15,000 unintended pregnancies (including 3,200 teen pregnancies), 1,490 preterm or low birth-weight births, and 1,018 STIs. These statistics, along with the associated cost savings, far outweigh the fiscal impact of providing these services should federal funding be withheld or reduced.

Maryland has a long history of recognizing and promoting the benefits of broad access to family planning services, especially for low income and vulnerable populations. In light of the uncertainty of federal action with respect to Title X, Maryland is wise to be proactive in protecting the existing service delivery framework and program funding to ensure we can continue to serve the needs of women and their families. A favorable report is requested for House Bill 1083.

**For more information call:**

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