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Maine Family Planning Responds to Trump-Pence Administration's Attack on Title X

AUGUSTA – The Trump administration's proposed gag rule, which singles out health care providers like Maine Family Planning (MFP) and bars them from receiving federal family planning funds through the Title X program, is a political assault on women and families nationwide that will make it harder for low-income and rural Mainers to access the comprehensive health care they need.

The rule would ban any provider that offers abortion or even refers for the procedure from participating in the Title X program, enacted almost 50 years ago to provide quality family planning care to those who may not be able to afford it on their own.

MFP opposed this dangerous rule when it was first issued by President Ronald Reagan 30 years ago, and we oppose it now.

For over 45 years, MFP has been Maine's sole Title X grantee. MFP directly operates 18 clinics in towns as far north as Fort Kent, Presque Isle, and Houlton, as far west as Rumford and Farmington, and as far east as Calais and Machias (map of service sites attached). MFP also uses these funds to subcontract with Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and Greater Portland Health Community Center to provide Title X services in the southern part of the state. In addition, MFP subcontracts with 20 federally qualified health centers and 5 school-based health centers. Altogether, these funds help buoy a comprehensive network of 47 sites serving 22,631 women, men, and teens statewide – close to 80 percent of whom qualify for free or reduced-fee services.

In addition, MFP is the only independent Title X direct grantee in the country to make abortion available as part of a full spectrum of reproductive health services. As such, the domestic gag rule would uniquely undercut our ability to provide care to those in need.

"The Trump administration's ideological attack on Title X pulls the rug out from under tens of thousands of Mainers who depend on Maine Family Planning for expert care," said George A. Hill, president and CEO of Maine Family Planning. "This is clear political pandering to right-wingers obsessed with undermining abortion rights and access in this country. But when these political points are won at the expense of people's health care, we cannot stand for it."

Across our state and the nation, hundreds of thousands of poor, rural, and underserved individuals rely on Title X – and for many of them, it is their only source of health care. Dismantling this network would not only result in more unintended pregnancies, but also in poorer health outcomes in vulnerable communities.

"The effect of this rule will be to make it harder for people with low incomes to get the health care they need," said Hill. "It gets us closer to returning to a time where women of means have access to all the care they need and everyone else suffers. It will increase inequality in health care."

Maine Family Planning will not allow this attack on women, medical ethics, and reproductive rights to occur on our watch. We will pursue every option – on our own and with allies – to prevent its implementation. And nothing will stop us from fulfilling our mission of providing the full range of reproductive health care to people who need it. We are committed to continuing to make quality abortion care available in Maine.

Interviews can be arranged with CEO George A. Hill.