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**STATE OPTS OUT OF TITLE X FUNDING THAT WOULD LIMIT FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES**

*State will use its own funds to ensure Vermonters can access full services*

BURLINGTON, VT – Following new limits on how federal Title X funding can be used, Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD notified the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that it will stop using those funds provided to Planned Parenthood of Northern New England for family planning services in Vermont. Instead, the Vermont Department of Health will use State funds that have been reserved to ensure these services can continue.

Title X is a federal grant program created in 1970 dedicated to providing comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services to low-income families or uninsured people who might not otherwise have access to these basic health care services. HHS recently [issued a Final Rule](#) that prevents Title X funds from being used to provide the full range of family planning and reproductive health care services.

“These changes by HHS will disrupt one of our state’s most essential public health programs,” Dr. Levine said. “For nearly 50 years, Title X has helped ensure that Vermonters have access to quality family planning and we want to make sure this continues.”

Approximately 10,000 Vermonters receive services through Title X at 10 Planned Parenthood health centers located across the state. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England is the state’s sole provider of family planning services in Vermont.

The notice was sent to HHS on August 15 in advance of its August 19 deadline requiring states to submit a plan outlining how they will comply with changes by the Trump Administration that will restrict patients’ access to information about abortion and other reproductive health services.

State officials expressed concern that complying with the changes to Title X would disrupt the state’s network of health services and providers’ obligation to give patients the range of options. Complying with the restrictions would also violate state law. In 2019, Vermont enshrined in law “the fundamental right of every individual who becomes pregnant to choose to carry a pregnancy to term, to give birth to a child, or to have an abortion” and prohibited

interference with “regulation or provision of benefits, facilities, services or information, the choice of a consenting individual to terminate the individual’s pregnancy.”

“It’s important that we maintain women’s rights and access to health care,” said Governor Phil Scott. “It’s unfortunate we are at this point, but I appreciate the collaboration with the Attorney General and Legislature to put aside contingency funding in the 2018 budget. Vermont joins Hawaii, Illinois, New York, Oregon, Washington, Massachusetts and Maryland in foregoing Title X,” Governor Scott added.

“Vermont remains unwaveringly committed to our system of care that respects the rights of patients to access quality care, and respects the rights of health care professionals to provide that care,” said Secretary of Human Services Martha Maksym.

In his notice to HHS, Dr. Levine expressed the hope that the changes to Title X prove to be short-lived, and that the Health Department and HHS can return to its historical partnership.

Access to quality family planning is recognized as one of the 10 greatest public health achievements. Vermont’s medical community has come out in [strong opposition to the rule](#).

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