

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Appropriating \$9.5 Million for Family Planning Services

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Legislation Replaces Federal Funding for Family Planning Providers Impacted by Title X Gag Rule

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed A5802, which makes a Fiscal Year 2020 appropriation of \$9.5 million to the New Jersey Department of Health for family planning services. The legislation will replace critical federal funding for family planning services that are impacted by the Trump Administration's implementation of the Title X gag rule, which limits access to health care and family planning resources.

"The federal government has once again put narrow political interests before the best interests of the American people by implementing the Title X gag rule, which blocks women from access to vital information and resources that are critical to their health," **said Governor Murphy**. "Family planning providers like Planned Parenthood made a conscious decision to continue providing health care information and resources at the expense of much-needed federal funding. Today, New Jersey is stepping up to replace federal Title X funding for family planning providers to ensure that New Jersey's women and families have access to high-quality reproductive health care resources and family planning services."

"The federal government's Title X gag rule jeopardizes access to critical health care services such as cancer screenings, sexually transmitted disease testing, affordable birth control, and more for approximately four million patients served across the country," **said First Lady Tammy Murphy**. "Ensuring access to comprehensive family planning services is critical and this necessary legislation will lead to better health outcomes for New Jersey's women and children."

"The Trump Administration's gag rule pulling funding away from affordable women's healthcare has put millions of lives at risk in this country, and today, New Jersey is fighting back to provide critical care for women and their families," **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs**. "The bill that Governor Murphy is signing today will fill the federal void by replacing critical Title X funding to serve all women in New Jersey, regardless of income, who rely on access to this routine care to survive."

"I am grateful to the Governor and the Legislature for protecting access to reproductive health care for tens of thousands of New Jerseyans," **said Acting Commissioner Judith M. Persichilli**. "With the signing of this legislation, Governor Murphy is ensuring that New Jersey's family planning providers will not be forced to choose between receiving funding to keep their doors open or delivering care in a comprehensive, patient-centered manner based on national best practices."

In February 2018, Governor Murphy signed his first piece of legislation which restored \$7.45 million in funding to Planned Parenthood and other women's health facilities that had been cut during the Christie administration. Governor Murphy also signed legislation (S105/A1656) providing Medicaid coverage for family planning services to low-income individuals. With the signing of this legislation, the New Jersey Department of Human Services created a new family planning benefit program for women and men with

 [Back to top](#)

incomes that are higher than traditional Medicaid eligibility. The benefit, called Plan First, launched in October 2019, and provides coverage for birth control, the HPV vaccine, family planning-related lab testing, and other targeted family planning-related health care needs.

Primary sponsors of the legislation include Assemblymembers Louis Greenwald, Joann Downey, Gordon Johnson, and Annette Quijano, Senate President Stephen Sweeney, and Senators Loretta Weinberg and Troy Singleton.

"The Title X gag rule has forced family planning service providers, like Planned Parenthood, to withdraw from the federal program in order to protect the quality of patient care it delivers to millions of women and low-income families across the state and the nation," **said Assembly Majority Leader Greenwald**. "The funding deficit— if the state did not step in to fill the gap— would have had a significant negative impact on New Jersey's family planning and women's health services' day to day operations and the health of women in our state. We stand with Planned Parenthood and other family planning services that have provided extraordinary care to New Jerseyans for decades."

"The Trump administration's gag rule on Title X funding forced Planned Parenthood and other healthcare providers to make an impossible choice: deny female patients access to health services, or withdraw from the program and lose funding that is absolutely vital to its operations," **said Assemblywoman Downey**. "Planned Parenthood chose to prioritize the needs of women in refusing to abide by this immoral gag rule, but it would have also meant access to healthcare for thousands of women in New Jersey would be significantly diminished. It would have been far more difficult for women - especially women of color - to find the resources they need to make informed decisions about their health. This gag rule is a blatant attack on women's rights."

"We in New Jersey understand the importance of access to care; that's why the Legislature restored funding for family planning and women's health services in the State budget in the past two fiscal years," **said Assemblyman Johnson**. "We must keep fighting for equal access to healthcare for all women, starting with ensuring Planned Parenthood and other providers have the tools they need to continue providing quality care."

"Many low-income women rely on family planning clinics for regular check-ups, care before and after pregnancy, cancer screenings, HIV testing and many other health concerns," **said Assemblywoman Quijano**. "Restricting access to family planning centers would have left some women with nowhere to turn. The funding allocated in this law is vital to make sure quality healthcare centers like Planned Parenthood are able to keep their doors open."

"On behalf of Planned Parenthood's patients across the state, we thank Governor Murphy and the state legislature for protecting access to care," **said Kaitlyn Wojtowicz, Vice President of Public Affairs for Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey**. "With this bill signing, our providers will continue to provide the lifesaving reproductive health care services that patients need and deserve."

"New Jersey has demonstrated exceptional leadership in its efforts to rebuild and stabilize the state's publicly funded family planning program," **said Joseph Alifante, President and CEO of the New Jersey Family Planning League**. "We thank Governor Murphy and the state Legislature, and will continue to partner with the state to maintain uninterrupted access to high-quality, patient-centered family planning services throughout New Jersey."

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[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

[Administration](#)

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about/\)](#)

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[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](/governor/admin/fl/)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet/\)](/governor/admin/cabinet/)

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[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](/governor/admin/internship.shtml)

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[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](/governor/initiatives/#Economy)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](/governor/initiatives/#Education)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](/governor/initiatives/#Environment)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](/governor/initiatives/#Health)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](/governor/initiatives/#Justice)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](/governor/initiatives/#Transportation)

News & Events

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[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml)

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[Advice and Consent Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](/governor/news/acappointments)

[Statements on Legislation](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[\(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](/governor/news/press)

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