



HB1272 - Maryland Department of Health - Family Planning Program - Funding
Presented to the Hon. Shane Pendergrass and
Members of the House Health and Government Operations Committee
March 6, 2019 at 1:00 p.m.

POSITION: SUPPORT

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland **urges the House Health and Government Operations Committee a favorable report on HB1272 - Maryland Department of Health - Family Planning Program – Funding.**

Our organization is an advocate for reproductive health, rights, and justice. We strive to ensure every childbearing individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how to plan for their future and their families. In our efforts to advocate for these freedoms, we support legislation aimed to continue funding family planning services as they are essential to realizing family formation goals.

Across the United States, numerous individuals utilize family planning clinics for their reproductive and sexual healthcare needs. The Guttmacher Institute reports that women of reproductive age often report that their family planning provider is also their main source of healthcare.¹ These providers, often publicly funded, allow individuals access to services such as physical examinations and preventative medicine screenings (i.e. pelvic and breast exams, STI and pregnancy testing, pap smears, cancer screening, etc.), surgical or medical procedures (i.e. vasectomies, tubal ligation), information and access to birth control and contraception options. Many provide valuable resources to marginalized communities that may not have equitable or quality access to the same services (i.e. LGBTQ+, low-income, or homeless individuals). With nearly 73,000 Marylanders using sexual and reproductive healthcare services in 2017, public funding for these providers assists in offering a vital source of healthcare for a large portion of our state's residents.²

The goals of Title X family planning funding are numerous - to help avoid unintended pregnancies, reduce the spread of sexually transmitted infections, decrease rates of infertility, avoid pregnancy complications, and encourage preventative sexual healthcare.³ Abortion care is medical care. HB1272 aims to prevent the State of Maryland from seeking Title X federal funds should those funds exclude family planning providers that do offer abortion care as well as those which provide information and referral for abortion care access. Receiving funding prohibiting medical care providers from offering a wide range of acceptable and effective medically approved family planning methods and services will threaten the reproductive freedom of our residents. Additionally, HB1272 allocates annual state funding at the same level of funds provided the previous fiscal year should Title X funds not be accepted by the state. This legislation ensures that funds for all family planning services be available for all individuals ultimately supporting the rights of individuals to make informed and independent decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

It is important for Maryland to reaffirm its commitment to ensure every childbearing individual has the freedom to decide if, when, and how to plan for one's future. For these reasons, **NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland urges a favorable committee report on HB1272.** Thank you for your time and consideration

¹ Frost JJ, *U.S. Women's Use of Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: Trends, Sources of Care and Factors Associated with Use, 1995–2010*, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2013.

² Fowler, C. I., Gable, J., Wang, J., & Lasater, B. (2018, August). *Family Planning Annual Report: 2017 national summary*. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. p. 112 <https://www.hhs.gov/opa/sites/default/files/title-x-fpar-2017-national-summary.pdf>

³ Institute of Medicine; (US) Committee on a Comprehensive Review of the HHS Office of Family Planning Title X Program; Stith Butler A, Wright, Clayton E., editors. (2009) *A Review of the HHS Family Planning Program: Mission, Management, and Measurement of Results*. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK215219/>