

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 20, 2021

The Honorable Xavier Becerra  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra:

We write to request the Department of Health and Human Services' support for family planning services and health providers in New Hampshire who may be negatively impacted as a result of the recently signed biennial state budget. Signed into law June 25, 2021, this budget enacts harmful restrictions on women's health services and creates a challenging fiscal environment for family planning providers across the state. The recent announcement by HHS to reverse the "Title X Gag Rule" issued under the Trump Administration is a critical step towards restoring safe access to reproductive health care for women, and has the potential to restore long-term support for Title X recipients in New Hampshire.

While this announcement by HHS is welcome news, many health centers are likely to find themselves without critical funding because of their withdrawal from the Title X program in 2019. This gag rule prohibited Title X grants from being delivered to programs where clinicians inform patients about family planning options and abortion services, limiting health care options for millions of predominantly low-income Americans. Censoring the information that providers can offer their patients sets a dangerous precedent of Federal entanglement in personal health care decisions and prevents patients from having information about *all* their treatment options.

The effects of this policy were felt here in New Hampshire, when in 2019 70% of Title X grantees completely left the program. Curtailing Title X-funded services, which include sexually transmitted infection testing, cancer screening and HIV testing and treatment, represents an attack on women's health and we commend your Department for actively working to reverse this Trump-era policy. However, even an expeditious approval of this policy change will likely leave health centers in New Hampshire without financial support as a result of the recently passed biennial budget and their exit from Title X. This gap in financing will significantly impact the day-to-day operations of these centers and imperil access to care for over 16,000 Granite State women who receive health services through Title X providers. To address this funding gap, we are requesting to work in partnership with HHS and New Hampshire health centers to ensure they have the financial stability and standing to continue serving women across New Hampshire.

We appreciate your attention to this request and are grateful for your leadership in reversing the damaging Title X Gag Rule that has negatively impacted women's health services in our state.

Sincerely,



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress