

Pro-Life Wisconsin



Defending them all. . .

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TO: Members, Wisconsin State Legislature
FROM: Matt Sande, Director of Legislation
RE: **Biennial Budget Bill (AB 75): Opposition to Family Planning Waiver Program Expansion and Birth Control Mandates**

The biennial budget bill as proposed by Governor Doyle and adopted by the Joint Finance Committee contains three Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin legislative agenda items. Together these items undermine parental authority and sexualize our teen children as well as violate the lawful conscience rights of pro-life pharmacists and health insurers. These items present sweeping social policy changes that have no place in our state budget bill. Accordingly, **Pro-Life Wisconsin (PLW) urges you to remove the following three policy items from the biennial budget bill:**

- 1) **Expanding the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program to men aged 15-44.** This state/federal program currently provides free, taxpayer-funded birth control to 15, 16 and 17-year-old girls without their parents' knowledge or consent. This undermines parental authority and increases underage pregnancy, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) by encouraging sexual promiscuity. Expanding the program to enroll 15-, 16-, and 17-year-old boys further undermines parental authority in the sensitive area of teen sexual health. Parents are naturally concerned about the sexual health of their teen children, not only to protect them physically but to guide them morally. If anything, the state should reinforce the parent-child relationship, not undermine it. Planned Parenthood argues that program services other than contraceptives are available to enrollees including treatment of STDs. They neglect to explain that these other services are available to women *only* in conjunction with contraceptive management services. PLW doubts the estimated cost savings to the State of Wisconsin that the Department of Health Services attributes to the program. Rather, we believe government-funded birth control fuels teen sexual activity and its consequent social pathologies.
- 2) **Forcing pharmacies to dispense prescribed contraceptive drugs or devices "without delay."** The Joint Finance Committee stuck this measure in the budget on Saturday evening of Memorial Day weekend with zero opportunity by those affected to voice their public opposition. Under this item, contraceptives are defined to include any drug or device approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that is used to "prevent pregnancy," including those restricted to distribution by pharmacies such as the morning-after pill. Violators would face up to \$2,500 in forfeitures for each violation. This measure is a bold attack on the lawful conscience rights of pro-life pharmacy professionals. Pharmacists, like doctors and nurses, are valued members of the professional health care team who should not be forced to choose between their consciences and their livelihoods. Together our federal and state constitutions protect religious expression and guarantee liberty of conscience. They therefore protect pharmacy owners of conscience who may choose not to stock and dispense contraceptives at their pharmacies.

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- 3) **Forcing commercial health insurance plans and self-insured governmental health plans (state, county, town, village, or school district) to cover contraceptive drugs and devices.** The Joint Finance Committee stuck this measure in the budget on Saturday evening of Memorial Day weekend with zero opportunity by those affected to voice their public opposition. Under this item, contraceptives are defined as drugs or devices approved by the FDA to “prevent pregnancy.” Pregnancy is not a disease. The government should not force private and public health insurers – and the policy holders who will pay for this expansion through increased premiums – to cover drugs and devices that are purely elective. There is more than one action a woman can take to avoid pregnancy. The real question is who should be responsible for her choices. PLW argues that it should not be Wisconsin taxpayers, many of whom are medically and morally opposed to birth control. Hormonal contraceptives including the morning-after pill, the Pill, and the Patch do not always prevent fertilization. Instead, they can act to induce early abortions by chemically preventing implantation of the newly conceived human embryo. Many of these drugs and devices also have serious, sometimes deadly, side-effects.

Again, PLW strongly urges the Assembly and Senate to remove the following policy items from the budget bill:

- **Expanding the *Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program* to men aged 15-44.**
- **Forcing pharmacies to dispense prescribed contraceptive drugs or devices.**
- **Forcing public and private health insurance plans to cover contraceptive drugs and devices.**

The *Family Planning Waiver Program* undermines parents and threatens the physical and moral health of our teen children. And the birth control mandates violate the lawful (constitutional) conscience rights of pro-life pharmacists, health insurers, businesses and patients. The social implications of these measures are enormous and deserve to be debated in the light of day as separate legislation.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.