

Pro-Life Wisconsin



Defending them all. . .

P.O. Box 221, Brookfield, WI 53008-0221
Phone (262) 796-1111 Fax (262) 796-1115
info@prolifewisconsin.org www.prolifewisconsin.org

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TO: Members, Joint Committee on Finance

FROM: Matt Sande, Director of Legislation

RE: **Governor's Biennial Budget Bill (AB 75): Opposition to Family Planning Waiver Program Expansion**

Pro-Life Wisconsin has been working to protect teen girls from a physically and morally destructive program called the *Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program*. The *Family Planning Waiver Program* currently provides free, taxpayer-funded birth control to 15, 16 and 17-year old girls without their parents' knowledge or consent. Federal and state law prohibits parents from being notified that their minor daughters are receiving free contraceptives under this demonstration project. This undermines parental authority and increases underage pregnancy, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) by encouraging sexual promiscuity. Accordingly, Pro-Life Wisconsin strongly opposes expanding the *Family Planning Waiver Program* to men aged 15-44 as proposed in the Governor's biennial budget bill.

The Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program

Opposed by Pro-Life Wisconsin from its inception, the *Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program* currently provides "family planning" services and supplies for women age 15 through 44 who are at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. Women applying for the program are considered presumptively eligible and therefore may receive services immediately with no co-payment. Importantly, family income is disregarded as an eligibility factor for women under 19 who are not married and have no children. Therefore almost every teen girl in the state is financially eligible. Federal and state law prohibits parental notification of an underage child who applies for services under this program. Accordingly, eight states – Alabama, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Wyoming – prevent minor girls from enrolling in their respective family planning waiver programs, limiting them to women who are at least 19 years of age. Three states limit their programs to women who are least 18 years of age – New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Texas. Pro-Life Wisconsin worked the last several legislative sessions to block minor girls' access to the program by raising the minimum eligibility age from 15 to 18.

The Governor's Budget Proposal

The Governor's proposed budget expands the *Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program* to men aged 15-44. Although male teens cannot now be prescribed oral contraceptives, covered services under the *Family Planning Waiver Program* include condoms, sexually transmitted disease (STD) screenings, and reproductive health information. And it appears that male contraceptives (pills and implants) are on the way. A male contraceptive trial was conducted over a five-year period at the ANZAC Research Institute in New South Wales, Australia, and Prince

Henry's Institute in Victoria. The trial used a method of male contraception based on long-acting hormones that suppressed sperm production in a reliable and reversible way. The technique, found to be 95 percent effective, involved using an injection of the progestin called DMPA and an implant of the male sex hormone testosterone. As male contraception is perfected, approved and commercialized, we can easily anticipate it being a covered service for men under the *Family Planning Waiver Program*.

The following points argue the necessity of blocking expansion of the *Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program*:

- **Family Planning Waiver Program Undermines Parents:** Providing free, taxpayer-funded birth control to 15 year old boys and girls behind parents' backs is irresponsible public policy. 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. Who do we want to be the confidants of our young sons and daughters – parents, or Planned Parenthood? That is the question all parents in this state should be asking themselves.

A recent Zogby poll revealed that 70 percent of parents either “strongly disapprove” or “disapprove” of their child being able to obtain contraception without their knowledge or approval.* The very least we can do as a state is to respect parental authority; to recognize the love and concern that parents have for their children. To do otherwise is to adopt a very cynical and threatening attitude toward parents.

*(Zogby International 2003 Survey on Parental Opinions of Character-Based, Abstinence-Until-Marriage Sex Education vs. Comprehensive [“Abstinence-First,” Then Condoms] Sex Education, Feb. 13, 2003)

- **Family Planning Waiver Program Increases STDs:** Government-funded birth control contributes to an increase in STDs by encouraging sexual promiscuity. The Pill, the Morning-After Pill, and the Patch offer no protection against STDs including AIDS. With over thirty viruses today compared to only two in 1960, STDs among our teens have become a full-blown epidemic. **Every day, 8,000 teens become infected with an STD** – a direct result of our overemphasis on birth control and our culture’s “sex-with-no-consequences” mindset.

After twenty years crusading for safe sex by dispensing condoms and the Pill to adolescent patients, Dr. Meg Meeker, M.D., as described in her book Epidemic – How Teen Sex is Killing Our Kids,* realized she was horribly mistaken when her teen patients began marching in with dangerous STDs. She now counsels teens and parents on the *medical* importance of waiting to have sex. It’s time the State of Wisconsin reassess the so-called benefits of “family planning” for Wisconsin’s children.

*(“Epidemic: How Teen Sex is Killing our Kids,” by Meg Meeker, M.D., Lifeline Press, October 2002)

- **Family Planning Waiver Program is Ineffective:** Compelling data indicates that broad contraceptive availability may actually work to *increase* underage pregnancy and abortion by encouraging sexual promiscuity, debunking Planned Parenthood’s theory that the provision of contraceptives to teens will reduce underage pregnancies.

A March 2002 study published in the *Journal of Health Economics* investigated the impact of family planning on teenage conceptions and abortions by testing data from 16 United Kingdom regions over a 14-year period.* **The author of the study concluded that “the overall effect of expanding family planning services for under-16s has been to increase pregnancies and abortion.”**

*(“The Economics of Family Planning and Underage Conceptions,” Dr. David Paton, Nottingham University Business School)

An April 2003 study published in the journal *Adolescent and Family Health* found that increased abstinence, not contraception, was the major cause of declining birth and pregnancy rates among single teenage girls.* It overturns Planned Parenthood’s claim that 75 percent of the decline in the pregnancy rate is due to contraceptive use and 25 percent to abstinence. The authors compared the drop in the birth and pregnancy rates between 1991 and 1995. **Among unmarried teens aged 15 to 19, abstinence accounted for 67 percent of the decrease in the pregnancy rate.** Similarly, a 51 percent drop in the birth rate for single teens aged 15 to 19 was attributed to abstinence.

*(“An Analysis of the Causes of the Decline in Non-marital Birth and Pregnancy Rates for Teens from 1991 to 1995,” Joanna K. Mohn,

MD, Lynne R. Tingle, Ph.D., Reginald Finger, MD, MPH)

Based on the above-mentioned empirical studies (which raise serious doubts as to the effectiveness of family planning services in reducing underage pregnancies and abortion), **Pro-Life Wisconsin is highly suspicious of the estimated cost savings to the State of Wisconsin that the Department of Health Services attributes to the Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program.**

It is becoming increasingly clear that the availability of confidential “family planning” services to our teens is encouraging sexual promiscuity and with it a host of social pathologies. Protecting young boys and girls from the devastating physical and emotional effects of STDs, pregnancy and abortion, as well as ensuring the rights of parents to be involved in such important issues in their children’s lives is our moral and civic duty. **We urge the committee members to block expansion of the *Medicaid Family Planning Waiver Program to men aged 15-44.***

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of the social and moral implications of this powerful program.