



Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

For Immediate Release:
February 28, 2016

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Access to Reproductive Health Care At Risk in New Jersey
*Breast and cervical cancer cases and bacterial sexually transmitted infections
up since family planning funding cuts*

TRENTON, NJ – On the heels of Governor Christie’s final budget address, a new report released by Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey, *Access at Risk: Reproductive Health and Family Planning in New Jersey*, paints an alarming picture of the real-world consequences for New Jersey residents when politicians block access to and defund basic family planning services, including cancer screenings and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

“No one does more than family planning providers to prevent unintended pregnancies and keep women and families healthy,” said Casey Olesko, Communications Manager with Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey. “If the Governor truly cares about public health, he should restore funding for family planning services to the state budget.”

The *Access at Risk* report outlines key findings that show the continued need for basic, preventive reproductive health care in the state.

- **The number of cases of bacterial sexually transmitted infections (chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis) has increased 35 percent statewide since funding for family planning services was cut from the state budget in 2010.** Half of New Jersey counties have experienced an increase of nearly 50 percent or more. Sexually transmitted infections, if left untreated, can lead to serious health issues like infertility and certain types of cancer.
- **Between 2009 and 2013, the number of breast and cervical cancer cases has risen 5.2 percent among all New Jersey women, 6.6 percent among Black women, and an alarming 25.1 percent among Latinas.** The unfortunate reality is that women of color in the U.S. face more barriers to accessing health care than white women, and so are less likely to get preventive screenings, more likely to be diagnosed at later stages, and more likely to experience worse health outcomes when it comes to breast and cervical cancer because of these barriers.
- **More than 435,000 women across New Jersey need contraception that is publicly funded, a 5 percent increase since 2010.** The ability to plan, prevent, and space pregnancies is directly linked to benefits to women, men, children, and society, including more educational and economic opportunities, healthier babies, more stable families, and a reduced taxpayer burden.

Although more New Jersey residents have health insurance coverage thanks to the Affordable Care Act, nearly 295,000 women of reproductive age (15-49) remained uninsured in New Jersey in 2016. With a rapidly changing and uncertain health care landscape, it is more important than ever to support preventive reproductive health services in our state. Investing in family planning will help New Jersey residents get access to the life saving cancer screenings, affordable birth control, and sexually transmitted infection testing and treatment they need.

Investments in reproductive health services not only provide women with more control over their health

(MORE)

and their own family planning, but they are also a great deal for taxpayers. According to research released by the Guttmacher Institute, for every \$1 we invest in family planning services, we save \$7 in the long run in associated costs, such as averted unintended pregnancies, prevented sexually transmitted infections, and cases of breast and cervical cancer that are caught and treated early.

Nationally, 75 percent of Planned Parenthood patients have incomes at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level. Without Planned Parenthood's approximately 650 health centers across the country, including 26 health centers in New Jersey, many patients would not have timely access to basic preventive health care services. Family planning providers are critical to the health care safety net, delivering high-quality services to a majority of women who rely on public funds for care. It is clear that other safety net providers could not meet the overwhelming demand if Planned Parenthood health centers were to close.

"Access to care should not depend on your income or your zip code," concluded Olesko.

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Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey (PPAFNJ) is a nonpartisan 501(c)(4) non-profit social welfare organization, and the advocacy arm of the Planned Parenthood Affiliates in New Jersey. We advocate for access to essential health care through education, activism, voter engagement, grassroots organizing, and legislative advocacy. For more information, visit our website at: www.ppactionnj.org.