



WI CAN News Digest

October 15 – November 14, 2019

State

[Court Rules Legislature Can't Intervene in Planned Parenthood Case](#)

The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a U.S. District Court decision to deny intervention by the Wisconsin Legislature in a case brought against the state by Planned Parenthood. The decision is a setback for the GOP-controlled legislature, which argued that a law it passed during the lame duck session after Gov. Tony Evers was elected gave it the right to intervene with its own lawyers in any court to defend state statutes, even when the attorney general was already defending the statute. In January, Planned Parenthood challenged Wisconsin laws allowing only doctors to perform abortions and requiring women seeking abortions to see the same doctor on two separate visits. **11.08.19**

[Legislators End Session with Little Consensus, No Action on Gun Control](#)

If the final day of contentious legislative session, a bill (AB-304) to allow pharmacists to prescribe hormonal contraceptives passed the Assembly. The author, Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay), sought to persuade fellow Republicans opposed to the bill that he was satisfied that hormonal contraceptives do not cause abortions as some anti-abortion groups have falsely claimed. Kitchens said expanding the availability of birth control could help reduce abortions and reduce social service costs, such as Medicaid, associated with unintended pregnancies. Rep. Mary Felzkowski (R-Irma), speaking for the bill, suggested that it was in line with Republican principles. “We are the party of less regulation,” she said. “We are the party of personal choice.” The bill passed 82-13, with the ‘no’ votes all cast by Republicans; it now goes to the Senate, which has adjourned for the fall but could take it up next year if Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald allows it to move forward. **11.08.19**

[What Hasn't Happened in Health Care. Some Health Legislation Passes, but Major Issues Fall from Legislature's Agenda](#)

In the legislative floor session that ends Nov. 12, health care — a topic that ranks as a top concern for Wisconsinites — has taken a back seat to contentious battles over Gov. Tony Evers' powers and even his cabinet choices. While some topics have been taken up, there has been no progress on such issues as access (eg Medicaid expansion, pre-existing conditions protections), costs (eg prescription drugs), doulas, and postpartum care. **11.07.19**

[A Bill That Would Allow Pharmacists to Prescribe Birth Control Pills Continued to Divide Republican Lawmakers As It Passed Out of an Assembly Panel with Bipartisan Support and Opposition.](#)

In an August public hearing, the measure faced pushback from Rep. Chuck Wichgers (R-Muskego) who expressed concern about the use of state dollars to “to bring services to the rural areas because of a lack of people” and was “floored” that lawmakers would advance a bill making contraceptives more accessible when

rural areas are in need of new residents. “I don’t know how that’s going to make sense 10 years from now,” he said. **10.30.19**

[Local Reproductive Freedom Index. Evaluating U.S. Cities | 2019](#)

The National Institute for Reproductive Health has published The Local Reproductive Freedom Index, which evaluates the reproductive health, rights, and justice policies of cities across the United States. The Local Index analyzes the policies in place in 50 cities across the country, including [Madison](#) and [Milwaukee](#), and offers suggestions for how any can become a more equitable community. **10.21.19**

National

[Federal Judge Blocks HHS 'Conscience Rule' for Health Care Workers](#)

A federal judge in New York has blocked the Department of Health and Human Services' so-called conscience rule, which lets health care workers who cite moral or religious reasons opt out of providing certain medical procedures, such as abortion, sterilization, and assisted suicide. **11.06.19**

[Crisis Pregnancy Centers in the U.S.: Lack of Adherence to Medical and Ethical Practice Standards](#)

The Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine and the North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology published a joint position paper that describes how crisis pregnancy centers can harm young people—including through sex education programs. The position paper asserts, among other things, that federal, state, and local governments should only support programs that provide adolescents and young adults experiencing or at risk for unplanned pregnancy with medically accurate, unbiased, and complete health information including comprehensive information about FDA-approved methods of contraception and the full range of pregnancy options, including abortion. **11.01.19**

[Title X Family Planning Services: Impactful but at Severe Risk](#)

New data from the Guttmacher Institute illustrate the benefits of Title X–supported services. The analysis shows that in 2016, Title X–supported clinics services resulted in: contraceptive services provided to about 3.5 million female patients; 755,000 pregnancies postponed or avoided; prevention of about 44,000 chlamydia infections, 7,200 gonorrhea infections, and 370 cases of HIV among the partners of women obtaining this care; avoidance of 4,600 cases of pelvic inflammatory disease, 780 cases of infertility, 410 ectopic pregnancies, and 740 cases of cervical cancer. Note that these data are from long before the Trump administration’s new Title X rules were even proposed. **10.31.19**

[Is the Supplemental Title X Funding Awarded by HHS Filling in the Gaps in the Program?](#)

A new Kaiser Family Foundation analysis finds that the supplemental Title X funding that HHS awarded to grantees to “prioritize filling service gaps” in the federal family planning program still leaves significant gaps in many parts of the country. Eighteen out of 90 grantees across the country have withdrawn from the program in response to new Trump Administration regulations which prohibit Title X clinics from providing abortion referrals, require physical separation of abortion services, and mandate prenatal care referrals for all pregnant women. The Office of Population Affairs, the agency that oversees the Title X program, offered the remaining grantees in 35 states the opportunity to obtain supplemental funding. **10.18.19**