



WI CAN News Digest

February 15, 2020 – March 30, 2020

State

[Planned Parenthood Announces New Services in La Crosse, Sparta, Blair](#)

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin announced the expansion of health care services available at centers in La Crosse, Sparta, and Blair. The expanded services include endometrial biopsy, polyp removal, HPV vaccine, and early pregnancy complications. **2.24.20**

[Republicans Push Anti-Choice Constitutional Amendments to Circumvent Courts: Spotlight on the States](#)

Wisconsin Republicans are pushing a “personhood” amendment to the state constitution that would outlaw abortion care and many kinds of contraception by giving full constitutional rights to a fertilized egg. The measure would amend the state constitution to make sure Wisconsin’s pre-Roe abortion ban can go into effect if the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down Roe v. Wade. Though the amendment has the backing of Pro-Life Wisconsin, it’s opposed by the state’s largest anti-choice group, Wisconsin Right to Life, and is unlikely to advance through the Republican-controlled legislature this spring. **2.17.20**

[Laurel Rice and Marina Maes: Let Pharmacists Prescribe Birth Control Pills](#)

Wisconsin Assembly Bill 304 would improve access to many methods of birth control across the state by allowing pharmacists to prescribe and distribute certain types of hormonal contraceptives. The birth control methods this bill includes are safe, well studied, and highly effective. It is also important to note that all the methods covered in this bill work by preventing pregnancy. None are abortifacients. **2.17.20**

National

[COVID-19 Executive Orders Maintain Access to Family Planning Services](#)

The Society for Family Planning shared stay-at-home executive orders promulgated by [Washington](#), [New Jersey](#), and [Illinois](#) that specifically protect access to family planning services during the COVID-19 crisis. **3.25.20**

[Coronavirus Is Making It Harder for People to Get Birth Control](#)

When government officials issued guidance instructing Americans to self-isolate and social distance as much as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic, they also advised people to stock up on essential medications. For people on birth control, this mandate meant navigating a complicated maze to get the medication they need, including transferring prescriptions to new locations; getting an appointment during a time when many doctors are postponing or cancelling them; or figuring out how to pay for the medication after losing their jobs

and, therefore, their insurance coverage. This is to say nothing of possible birth control shortages as the pandemic disrupts supply chains. During a global pandemic, telemedicine would give patients one less thing to worry about, and one less hoop to jump through to make sure they're staying safe and healthy. **3.19.20**

[Reproductive Health Telemedicine Is Here During COVID-19 Outbreak—but Not for Abortion](#)

As COVID-19 spreads throughout the US, online birth control and emergency contraception prescribers are seeing an increase in patients, and reproductive health care via telemedicine has become critical. However options vary by state. For birth control, in the simplest of cases, patients can just fill out a questionnaire on a website or app, and then get a prescription after a doctor reviews their information. But some states make it more difficult than others. Also, as mandated by the Affordable Care Act, online birth control prescribers don't charge for regular birth control pills if the patient has insurance. But people may be losing their health insurance, and the uninsured are losing income. **3.18.20**

[The First 10 Years of the ACA: We Must Protect and Build on Major Gains in Sexual and Reproductive Health](#)

March 23 marks 10 years since President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act into law. Over this decade, the law has dramatically reduced the number of uninsured people in the United States, eliminated many unfair private insurance practices, expanded the scope of what health insurance covers, and instituted new patient protections. More specifically, it has expanded access to sexual and reproductive health services in numerous ways including requiring most private health plans to include coverage for a full range of contraceptive methods, services, and counseling, without copayments or other patient out-of-pocket costs. This contraceptive coverage guarantee has eliminated cost barriers that could be prohibitively high and helped women use the birth control method of their choice. Yet, continued challenges from the Trump administration and other conservative policymakers threaten its future. **3.18.20**

[Your Questions About Reproductive Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Answered](#)

Q. Should we be stocking up on contraceptives in the face of quarantine? What are some alternative ways to obtain these supplies during a lockdown? A: If someone is high risk and taking contraceptives to treat a medical condition or to prevent a high-risk pregnancy, they should have at least a three-month supply available. Alternative ways are to ask your health-care provider to send prescriptions to a mail-order service. Many clinics are extending prescriptions without appointments, and pharmacies remain open even in places with "shelter in place" orders. **3.17.21**

[The COVID-19 Outbreak: Potential Fallout for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights](#)

The global epidemic of COVID-19 is wreaking havoc on a wide array of health, economic, social, and personal decisions, including those related to sexual and reproductive health. At the health system level, we may see shortages of medication, including contraceptives, due to disruptions in supply chains; shortages of providers who deliver non-emergency care; and diversion of financial resources from reproductive health programs. Individuals have been advised to stockpile needed pharmaceuticals (including contraceptives), but building that stockpile can be difficult because of supply shortages and insurance practices. **3.11.20**

[Texas Foreshadows How Trump's 'Gag Rule' Will Destroy Teens' Access to Contraception](#)

Clinics that receive Title X family planning funds have traditionally been a place for teenagers to get confidential contraceptive and sexual health services, even in states that otherwise require parental consent. The Trump administration, however, has imposed rules that prevent providers from referring patients for abortion care, prioritize so-called natural family planning over more effective forms of contraception, and threaten confidentiality for adolescent patients. While the administration's domestic "gag rule" is gutting the Title X program across the country, a recent study out of Texas—where cuts to family planning programs began in 2011—suggests teenagers may be among those who lose the most. **3.10.20**

'Devastating': Ninth Circuit Court Greenlights Trump's 'Gag Rule'

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a block on the Trump administration's domestic "gag rule." The Title X gag rule, announced by HHS last March, bans health-care providers receiving Title X family planning funding from performing abortions or referring patients for abortion services. The rule also requires clinics to physically and financially separate abortion services and family planning services. Last September, the plaintiffs argued to the Ninth Circuit that the physical separation requirement was arbitrary and capricious because HHS failed to show an adequate need for it and ignored public comments that it would result in clinic closures. The majority rejected that argument. **2.24.20**

United States Drops to an 'F' in Reproductive Rights Report Card

The Population Institute, a nonprofit advocating for universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, issued an F to the United States for 2019; last year the country received a D- grade in "The State of Reproductive Health and Rights: A 50-State Report Card." An outsized factor in the failing grade: the Trump administration's Title X domestic "gag rule." **2.20.20**

Democrats Demand Trump Administration Withdraw Religious Provider Rule

Senate Democrats are demanding the Trump administration withdraw a proposed rule that would expand religious exemptions for federally funded faith-based social service providers. It would also eliminate a provision requiring federally funded faith-based organizations to give written notice to beneficiaries to ensure they are aware of the religious nature of the organization. **2.19.20**