



# WI CAN News Digest

April 1, 2020 – June 4, 2020

## State

### [Number of births at state, national levels continue to fall](#)

Last year in Wisconsin there were 63,242 births — a slight drop from 2018, when 63,922 births were recorded, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's down about 5 percent from 2016 during a year when 66,232 babies were born. Especially now with COVID-19 propelling the unemployment rate, experts expect at best "anemic" birth rates in the future, especially for people in their 20s and 30s, saying they're on track to have record low numbers of children and record postponement of pregnancy. **5.28.20**

### [Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin creates new ways for patients to receive health services virtually amid COVID-19 pandemic](#)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare institutions across the world are working to find innovative ways to treat patients while maintaining proper safety protocols for patients and staff. In April, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin launched a telehealth service to connect patients with trusted providers remotely through phone and/or through a private and secure video conferencing platform. Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin also launched the Planned Parenthood Direct mobile app for individuals who want convenient access to birth control but may not have easy access to a healthcare provider. **5.15.20**

### [ACA backers reiterate warning of threat to health law](#)

Attorney General Josh Kaul commented on developments in two Affordable Care Act lawsuits before the US Supreme Court in early May. One involved a case allowing employers claiming religious grounds to opt out of the ACA provision providing birth control at no cost to women, The other is about a Texas lawsuit seeking to overturn the ACA in its entirety. "If this suit is successful, millions of Americans will lose access to health insurance coverage," said Kaul. "We need more resources for our medical system, and it's one of the reasons why expanding Medicaid now is critical for the state of Wisconsin." **5.7.20**

### [Access to contraception and abortion is as critical as ever during COVID-19 pandemic](#)

To curb the spread of COVID-19 and put less strain on our health care system, health care systems across Wisconsin and the country have curtailed non-elective medical care during the pandemic. Anti-abortion politicians in Wisconsin and number of other states are seeing this as an opening to cut back on critical reproductive health services as well and have lobbied for the closure of abortion health care centers, many of which also provide contraceptive services. Restricting access to contraception and abortion would have significant negative consequences for individuals, families, communities and health systems. **4.9.20**

### [Wisconsin Republicans urge state health officials to temporarily close abortion clinics](#)

Legislative Republicans are calling on the state's top health official to shutter abortion services across Wisconsin amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In Wisconsin, Democratic Gov. Tony Evers' "safer at home" order closing nonessential businesses didn't specifically name abortion providers as among those that were allowed to operate, but it did list clinics generally. Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin posted on its Facebook page its sites remain open to provide a variety of services, such as birth control access, cancer screenings, STD treatments and more. **4.2.20**

## National

### [Congress can knock down reproductive health-care barriers for immigrants. Here's how](#)

Research shows that health insurance is a key factor in whether someone uses contraception and highly effective contraception that requires going to the doctor, in particular. The Health Equity and Access Under the Law for Immigrant Women and Families Act (HEAL Act) would open up access to health care, including reproductive health care, by eliminating the five-year waiting period on enrolling in Medicaid and allowing undocumented immigrants to purchase health coverage through the online marketplace. **5.20.20**

### [The Supreme Court could make contraception access even worse on Catholic campuses](#)

Though Catholic colleges doggedly recruit students, including from non-Catholic backgrounds, many campuses retain restrictive health policies. This could be made worse if the Supreme Court rules in favor of the Little Sisters of the Poor, which seeks to exempt any employer from the ACA requirement to provide access to contraception at no additional cost or co-pay. **5.19.20**

### [Telehealth company sees 50% increase in birth control requests during pandemic](#)

The telemedicine company Nurx says the company has experienced a 50 percent increase in the number of people who have requested birth control since the COVID-19 pandemic. They have also seen a 40 percent increase in people who want emergency contraception. **5.19.20**

### [The "Pill" at 60: promises unkept — unintended pregnancies must still be stamped out](#)

Six decades later, however, the "pill" has yet to deliver on its warrant to render unintended pregnancies a thing of the past. Nearly half of all pregnancies in the United States are still unintended. Many are attributable to the anachronism of prescription-only oral contraception long known to foment lapsed prescription refills. It follows that the age-old linkage of prescription renewal to a physician office visit is no longer sustainable. The time for unimpeded access to prescription-only contraceptives is now. Diminishing, if not eliminating, the prospect of unintended pregnancies will require nothing less. Most developed nations have crossed this bridge to great effect. **5.9.20**

### [How the approval of the birth control pill 60 years ago helped change lives](#)

When the pill was approved in 1960, women had few relatively few contraceptive options, and the pill offered more reliability and convenience than methods like condoms or diaphragms. For all it's done for women, the pill has a complex and controversial history; it was first tested on low-income women in Puerto Rico. The pill also has limitations; many would like to see it made available over the counter, as it is in some countries – not to mention, a pill for men. **5.9.20**

### [The women of the Supreme Court are sick of these nonsense objections to birth control](#)

Conservatives have been trying to unwind the birth control benefit in the Affordable Care Act for nearly a decade now, and the women justices on the U.S Supreme Court are over it. That much was apparent during oral arguments on early May in *Trump v. Pennsylvania* and its companion case, *Little Sisters of the Poor Saints v. Pennsylvania*. **5.7.20**

### [A Supreme Court showdown over birth control got much messier Wednesday](#)

The *Trump v. Pennsylvania* and *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania* cases heard by the Supreme Court in early May involve a longstanding battle over employers with religious objections to birth control. Federal rules require employer-provided health plans to cover contraceptive care, but the Trump administration created a sweeping exemption allowing any nonprofit employer, and any for-profit employer that is not publicly traded, to ignore the requirement to provide birth control coverage if it expresses a religious or moral objection. Every member of the Supreme Court's conservative majority has, in the past, expressed sympathy for religious objectors seeking exemptions from a generally applicable law. But each has also expressed a desire to limit federal agencies' discretion to make policy. And in arguments on these cases, several of those conservative justices appeared to realize that these two goals are in tension. **5.6.20**

### [Justices wary of 'Obamacare' birth control coverage changes](#)

In oral arguments in early May, the Supreme Court seemed concerned about the sweep of Trump administration rules that would allow more employers who cite a religious or moral objection to opt out of providing no-cost birth control to women as required by the Affordable Care Act. The Supreme Court's four liberal justices suggested they were troubled by the changes, which the government has estimated would cause about 70,000 women, and at most 126,000 women, to lose contraception coverage in one year. Chief Justice John Roberts, a key vote on a court split between conservatives and liberals, suggested that the Trump administration's reliance on a federal religious freedom law to expand the exemption was "too broad." **5.6.20**

### [Why US businesses are opining on a Supreme Court case about contraception](#)

23 organizations and corporations representing hundreds of thousands of employees filed a "friend of the court" brief regarding the *Trump v. Pennsylvania* and *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania* Supreme Court cases about conscience exemptions to contraceptive coverage under the ACA. These employers argue that these cases are a multi-trillion-dollar economic issue and that family planning is a pillar of equity in the workplace. The brief writes "American women contribute to economic innovation, productivity, and growth. These outcomes would not be possible without women's ability to control their own reproductive health, including access to contraception." **5.2.20**

### [A look at online platforms for contraceptive and STI services during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

There has been a proliferation of online services in recent years that seek to offer individuals that cannot make it to a clinic or do not have an established source of care access to some contraceptive methods and STI testing through a telemedicine platform, usually a website or a smartphone application. This Kaiser Family Foundation data note provides an overview of options available for the online management of sexual and reproductive health services during the current global pandemic and discusses the opportunities and limitations of these platforms in terms of availability and cost. **4.23.20**

### [Planned Parenthood is expanding telehealth to all 50 states amid the coronavirus pandemic](#)

As the coronavirus continues to threaten lives and shutter businesses across the country, more Americans are communicating with their doctors electronically than ever before. Now Planned Parenthood is joining the movement by expanding telemedicine services to all 50 states this month in an effort that providers say will help patients get necessary care while following social distancing guidelines, protecting health care workers and reducing opportunities to spread the coronavirus. **4.14.20**

### [Nine things congress must do to safeguard sexual and reproductive health in the age of COVID-19](#)

Congress could take the following steps to safeguard sexual and reproductive health in the time of COVID-19: 1) treat sexual and reproductive health as the essential care it is; 2) protect and expand access to comprehensive health insurance coverage; 3) bolster support for family planning providers in the US and

globally; 4) protect the pharmaceutical supply chain; 5) support telehealth for reproductive health services and providers; 6) prevent religious institutions from denying essential care and discriminating against patients; 7) secure the rights of people and communities at heightened risk. **4.8.20**