



American Medical Women's Association
The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

February 2020

On December 16, 2019, Congress released the final year-end appropriations package, and on December 20th, just before the deadline, the President signed the 2020 spending bills. Our country averted a government shutdown. What has been “shut down,” however, is Title X funding for health centers that provide family planning services that include abortion or that counsel women on abortion as one of many options for pregnancy. The U.S. “gag rule” remains and is reflected in the 2020 fiscal package.

The American Medical Women’s Association (AMWA) is disappointed once again at our government’s inability to protect basic reproductive rights.

Title X, set up in 1970, is a federal grant program that was created to provide Americans, primarily those with a low income, family planning and related services such as breast cancer screening, testing for sexually transmitted infections, and contraception counseling. The **gag rule in the U.S.** was created to prevent federal funding (like Title X) from being used to provide referrals for abortion services unless it’s for a medical emergency. The gag rule prevents doctors in Title X funded health centers from discussing abortion as an option. As a result, Planned Parenthood, who previously received the greatest amount of funding from Title X, pulled out of the program over the summer, thus losing the money needed to make reproductive health care affordable for millions of Americans.

As physicians and physicians in training, AMWA emphatically encourages Congress to repeal this gag rule. Title X funding provides critical health services. It provides education to adolescents about how to best take care of their bodies. It helps women figure out how to safely plan for future pregnancies. It helps catch early breast and cervical cancers. And it does all of this for people who would otherwise not be able to access this care.

The people of the United States deserve high quality health care, and we ask Congress to help support our efforts to take care of them.

Slavena Salve Nissan, Member, Advocacy Committee, AMWA

Connie B. Newman, MD, FACP, FAHA, FAMWA
Adjunct Prof. of Medicine, NYU Robert I. Grossman School of Medicine

Theresa Rohr--Kirchgraber, MD, FACP, FAMWA, Chair Advocacy Committee
Exec. Director, IU National Center of Excellence of Women's Health

Roberta E. Gebhard, D.O., President
American Medical Women's Association
Founder, AMWA Gender Equity Task Force