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The Minnesota Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

March 30, 2016

Representative Tara Mack
Health and Human Services Reform Committee
Minnesota State Legislature

Dear Representative Mack and Members of the Committee:

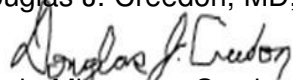
The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists is the premiere national organization committed to improving the health care for women not only through practice and research, but also through advocacy for women's health care issues. I am therefore writing today as the Chair of the Minnesota Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists to express my concerns related to H.F. 3373 and H.F. 3374. By eliminating Title X funding for patients attending Planned Parenthood clinics, this bill would be a significant setback for access to safe and reliable healthcare for women in the state of Minnesota.

Planned Parenthood health clinics play a vital role in improving the health and lives of the patients they serve, including providing low cost health care services for women in Minnesota. H.F. 3373/3374 would jeopardize access to health care for 45,000 Planned Parenthood patients who receive their health care at 15 Title X supported clinics - especially the 23,000 patients who rely directly on Title X funding for their care each year in Minnesota. This bill would block access to critical services like birth control, STD testing and treatment, clinical breast exams and life-saving cancer screenings. In the year 2015 alone, Planned Parenthood provided services for 64,000 patients in Minnesota and the Dakotas. This included 125,634 patient visits, over 12,500 screening exams for cervical and breast cancer, 1,000 vaccinations against the cancer-causing HPV virus, and 101,000 tests for sexually transmitted diseases. In partnership with Title X and the federal Government, Planned Parenthood has built an infrastructure of clinics in Minnesota that can reach those in need of contraceptive services. This infrastructure includes extensive systems to train family planning providers and provide support to other family planning clinics.

Planned Parenthood Clinics also provide legal abortion services. Ironically, eliminating Planned Parenthood and the services it provides would almost certainly lead to a dramatic increase in unwanted pregnancies and an increase in abortions. Local Planned Parenthood clinics distributed over 252,930 units of contraception last year and Planned Parenthood educators conducted comprehensive sex education programs for 40,000 youth and adults in our region. It is estimated that Planned Parenthood services prevented 12,800 unintended pregnancies in Minnesota last year alone.

Less than 5% of clinic visits last year were related to abortion services. All the rest were devoted to important women's health issues such as cervical cancer screening and treatment, contraception, and breast health. Planned Parenthood offers basic preventive services that are fundamental to women's health and well-being and, for many women, it is their only source of care. Therefore, I strongly oppose any efforts to defund or restrict the services Planned Parenthood provides.

Respectfully submitted,
Douglas J. Creedon, MD, PhD, FACOG



Chair, Minnesota Section, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists