

Testimony of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan CEO Lori Carpentier on HB 4145

Before the Standing Committee Meeting, House Appropriations, Rep. Al Pscholka, Chair

January 27, 2016 9:00 a.m.

Thank you, Chairman Pscholka and members of the committee for taking testimony today on House Bill 4145.

My name is Lori Carpentier and I am the President of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan. I recently celebrated my 30th anniversary at Planned Parenthood, the last 10 years serving as CEO and for 11 years before that running our medical centers (including being responsible for administering our Title X program). In the past, I've served more than 10 years on the State Family Planning Advisory Council (including as its Chair). I can honestly say that it has been a distinct honor for me to be a part of an organization that has been the most trusted name in women's health care for a century.

This bill and many others like it were written with a specific purpose - one that Representative Hooker has made dear throughout his tenure in the Michigan House of Representatives - to use any means to further his misguided agenda to put barriers between the people of Michigan and the comprehensive reproductive health programs and services that we provide, and ultimately to close the doors of Planned Parenthood health centers across the state. This puts Representative Hooker and others who agree with him out of step with the majority of Michiganders who support our work.

At a time when this legislature should be ever more vigilant about the role that state government plays in protecting the public interest, it is curious that Rep. Hooker would introduce a bill that could have a documented negative effect on the health of Michigan's families and increase the burden on taxpayers. Using the state budget to keep funds away from vital family planning programs is counter to our joint goal of reducing the number of unintended pregnancies in this state.

It's interesting to note that over 1500 family planning patients annually choose to use our health center in Representative Hooker's district. I can't help but wonder what they would think about his efforts to make routine preventive health care inaccessible to them.

It could be argued that House Bill 4145 merely codifies what is already boilerplate guidance in the budget. However, it is short-sighted to codify bad public policy. More than 90 percent of Planned Parenthood's services are preventive healthcare (And an aside, six of our 21 health centers provide abortion care). We are aligned with the majority of the medical establishment, including the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists that believe that abortion is a safe, necessary part of the

spectrum of women's healthcare. Our services are focused upon the prevention of unintended pregnancies, thereby reducing abortions. It is nonsensical to prevent patients from access to critical family planning services merely because our agency also provides a wide range of other services, including abortion.

The role we play as a provider of care to women, men and young people includes a population of low income patients who qualify for both state Medicaid and federal Title X programs. There are some misunderstandings about how Title X funding works and I'd like to use a bit of my time to offer some clarification.

First, we receive Federal Title X dollars based upon a competitive bid process. Under the contract, we are reimbursed only for specific services. Though we are one of over 30 Title X providers in Michigan, we serve 61 percent of the patients. What that means is that we are the largest provider of subsidized family planning care for low income women and families—with NO investment from the state.

Under the contract for Title X, we do not simply receive a blank check to spend as we see fit. We are reimbursed for well defined, allowable expenses to provide care that is strictly family planning in nature including breast and pelvic exams, contraceptive services, breast and cervical cancer screenings, screening and treatment of STDs and HIV as well as education about preventing both STDs and HIV. This funding is wholly inadequate to even cover the costs of the program. In 2014, we raised and used more than \$1M of private funding to augment this grant in order to meet our Title X patients' needs. In 2014, we received Title X dollars to serve 23,974 patients, but we served nearly 45,000.

We do all of this without investment from the state. We do not receive a single dollar of state originated funds for all of the family planning work that we do. Not one dollar.

Moreover, not a single dime of Title X money is ever used for abortion care. I'll say it again: Not a single dime of our public funding is used for abortion services. And you don't just have to take my word on that. We are audited by MDHHS and to verify this to be true and because of our level of funding, our routine annual financial audit (which in our case is done by Plante and Moran) includes a specific review of our use of these funds. As our colleagues from HHS will attest, public dollars spent on family planning are highly regulated, regularly audited, and essential to the survival of thousands of Michigan women and families.

For decades, we have been a proud partner and effective steward of public health in the state. We choose to be heavily involved in other public health initiatives including helping people around the state become enrolled in the Healthy Michigan Program, and becoming a voluntary distribution site for water and filters in Flint months ago. On several occasions, MDHHS has turned to us to expand our services when other providers choose to exit the Title X program.

At one time, Michigan was a leader in investing in family planning services, and our lower unintended pregnancy, teen birth and STD rates reflected that investment. Statistics clearly show that each dollar invested in family planning saves the state \$6 in future Medicaid costs. I'll say that another way – investing in family planning both empowers families and saves the state money. But instead of increasing our investment, we have seen a near-total disinvestment in these important programs. This has been the case over several years – and it is incredibly disappointing.

You might be surprised to learn that, while every Michigan county has a veterinarian, 21 Michigan counties have no practicing OB/GYN. For many of our 71,000 patients, coming to a Planned Parenthood center is the only healthcare they will receive in a given year. Laws that reduce access to preventive healthcare are exacerbating the current shortage of providers while cutting off access to those who need our care the most. It would be ill-advised to further reduce the possibilities of partnering with Planned Parenthood to provide care where it's needed most.

Planned Parenthood does more everyday to decrease the need for abortion than anyone who has testified today in support of this bill has ever done. Planned Parenthood has spent nearly 100 years making sure that women and their partners are empowered to decide if and when to have a child. By continuing to attack the most trusted name in family planning, you are not just attacking Planned Parenthood, you are violating the public trust.

