

# U.S. Planned Parenthood rejects federal funding to continue abortion referrals

As a new regulation takes effect, barring Title X – or family planning grant – recipients from making abortion referrals, Planned Parenthood has reportedly decided to forego the federal funds in order to continue directing women to abortion.

“We are not going to comply with a regulation that would require health care providers to not give full information to their patients,” Jacqueline Ayers, the group’s top lobbyist, told ABC News.

The Trump administration announced July 15 that parts of the Protect Life Rule, which prohibits recipients of Title X family planning funds from referring or performing abortions, will go into effect immediately. Clinics that provide “nondirective counseling” about abortion may still receive funds.

Pro-life advocates have praised the regulations as a commonsense way to ensure enforcement of already-existing rules against taxpayer money being used for abortions.

“A strong majority of Americans have consistently voiced their opposition to taxpayer funding of abortion – it is even unpopular among Democrats and self-described pro-choice Americans,” said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the pro-life organization Susan B. Anthony List last week.

“Without reducing Title X funding by a dime, the Protect Life Rule simply draws a bright line between abortion and family planning, stopping abortion businesses like Planned Parenthood from treating Title X as their private slush fund.”

The Protect Life Rule will strip about \$60 million in federal funding from Planned Parenthood, whose clinics both refer for abortion services and are co-located with abortion facilities. Planned Parenthood presently receives about one-fifth of the total amount of Title X funds distributed and serves about 40 percent of all clients who benefit from Title X.

Title X does not pay for abortions, but recipients have in the past been able to refer patients for abortion.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services informed Title X fund recipients on July 15 that they will no longer be permitted to refer mothers for abortions, and must keep finances separate from facilities that provide abortions.

Planned Parenthood described the court’s decision as “devastating” and

“crushing news,” though the organization remains eligible to receive \$500 million in other federal funding.

As of March next year, abortion facilities will no longer be allowed to co-locate with clinics that receive Title X money.

HHS received \$4.1 million in Title X funds in April to disburse to almost 70 service sites, many of which are Planned Parenthood affiliates, The Hill reports.

The rule is being challenged in federal court, but the administration says there is currently no legal obstacle to enforcing it, ABC News reports.

Title X is a federal program created in 1965 that subsidizes family-planning and preventative health services, including contraception, for low-income families. It has been frequently updated and subject to new regulations.

An independent family planning provider in Maine announced that it too would continue to refer for abortions and eschew federal funding.

Planned Parenthood’s president Dr. Leana Wen parted ways with the organization earlier this week, saying her employment had been ended due to “philosophical differences” with the board “over the direction and future of Planned Parenthood.”

Wen noted that when she was interviewed for the role of president, she asked the search committee whether they viewed the organization primarily as an advocacy organization “with medical services that are necessary to strengthen its impact” or as a health care organization “with advocacy as a necessary vehicle to protect rights and access.”

Wen said that she firmly believes Planned Parenthood to be fundamentally about health care, and has spent her eight months as president focusing on patient care and the promotion of reproductive rights as health care.

The board, however, wanted to move in a different direction, emphasizing abortion advocacy as their fundamental mission, she said.

Wen was appointed head of Planned Parenthood in September 2018, following the 12-year presidency of Cecile Richards. Political organizer Alexis McGill Johnson has been named as acting president.