

Planned Parenthood of Michigan Pens Letter to Gov. Whitmer Warning of More Closures without State Support

LANSING, MI — Today, Planned Parenthood of Michigan (PPMI) sent an open letter to Governor Gretchen Whitmer warning that without state funding, PPMI will be forced to close health centers in response to attacks from the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress.

Over the last year, lawmakers in DC have waged a relentless attack on Planned Parenthood, cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding for sexual and reproductive health care and blocking Planned Parenthood health centers from being reimbursed for services provided through Medicaid. PPMI has done everything within its power to absorb the impact of these historic federal funding cuts, but there is a limit to what operational efficiencies alone can do.

For months, PPMI has warned the governor's office and the legislature about nearing this crisis point. The governor's office told us the answer lies with the Legislature, while the Legislature has directed us back to the Governor. Michigan's patients are not a football to be passed between branches of government while a funding crisis compounds. Someone has to act – and we are asking Governor Whitmer to be that someone.

If Gov. Whitmer does not act to provide short-term funding, health centers in Michigan will be forced to close, making it even harder for patients and communities to get health care. You can read the full open letter below:

An Open Letter to Governor Gretchen Whitmer

From the Leadership and Boards of Planned Parenthood of Michigan and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan

Governor Whitmer,

For more than a year, the Trump administration has been escalating their relentless attacks on sexual and reproductive health care providers nationwide, including Planned Parenthood of Michigan. We've been doing everything possible to weather their cruel attacks against our patients, our services, and our funding, while continuing to provide care to everyone who is relying on us. But we are now facing a critical funding gap that we can not bridge alone.

We have raised concerns about this trajectory for months. We need you to take immediate action to keep our doors open because the window to preserve access to reproductive health care in Michigan, including abortion, is rapidly closing.

Every year, more than 60,000 times, someone in Michigan chooses Planned Parenthood for their health care and, despite the historic pressures we've been under, we have continued to deliver on our promise to provide care – no matter what. We have delivered despite significant funding cuts; despite ongoing legal challenges and court battles; despite funding being pulled from critical education programs; despite legislation that has blocked our patients from using their Medicaid insurance in our health centers.; and so much more.

We have persevered, but we can't sustain this alone or indefinitely. Because while the Trump administration has done everything in its power to shut us down, the need for the life-saving care we provide only continues to grow. Health care is more expensive and harder to get than ever and more of our patients are relying on us to cover the costs of their care. For years, we were able to make that work, thanks to the federally-funded Title X program, which covers care for people who can't afford it and don't qualify for Medicaid.

But now, as our patients are unable to use their Medicaid insurance, or have lost their private insurance, or can no longer afford the premiums on their ACA plan, more and more of the care we provide qualifies to be covered by Title X. But that means that our annual funding cap – which typically lasts from October to October – is already fully exhausted.

To keep our doors open and continue to provide care for Michiganders who have no other options, we need a one-time infusion of \$5 million.

What we are asking for is not novel. Other states have already faced this same moment and their leaders have acted. In Maine, Governor Janet Mills committed more than \$13 million to sustain reproductive health providers. In Illinois, Governor J.B. Pritzker directed existing state resources to fill the gap. They did not wait for a perfect legislative pathway – they used their executive authority because the need was urgent and the patients were real.

Michigan has that same authority, and we are calling on you to use it.

Without urgent state action, we will soon be forced to make decisions about our health centers and our programs that cannot be undone. Those decisions are closer than anyone should be comfortable with. For the patients who need an in-person exam, a cancer screening, or a procedure that cannot happen virtually, access depends on whether a health center is open. If we are forced to reduce our footprint again, those patients can't simply find another provider. In many of the communities we serve, there is no one else with the capacity to absorb them. When a PPMI health center closes, our patients don't just reappear somewhere else in the system. In many cases, they disappear from care altogether.

We already see what the alternative looks like every day. It is a patient who schedules a cancer screening because something does not feel right and they can't wait months for an appointment somewhere else. It is someone managing a chronic condition who needs to be seen in person, not redirected to a website or a phone line. It is a patient who has already delayed care once because of cost or access and is now back because they cannot delay any longer. These are not abstract cases and they are not interchangeable.

And the impact of losing critical public health infrastructure like a Planned Parenthood health center does not fall equally across our communities. Black women in Michigan die during childbirth more than two and a half times as often as white women, a disparity that persists regardless of income or education level. Michigan ranks 32nd in the nation for preterm birth rates. Transgender patients who come to us often do so because we are the only provider where they feel safe and seen. These are the patients who will bear the greatest cost of inaction, because they already carry the greatest burden of a health care system that was not built with them in mind.

We are in this position because of the actions of the Trump administration, their allies in Congress, and anti-abortion judges. Our own state House of Representatives is loyal to the President and his politics, foreclosing any possibility of a legislative appropriation to preserve the care we provide.

Put simply: there is no one else who can act to save our health centers. It is down to you.

Years ago, we worked together to enshrine the right to reproductive freedom into our state constitution. The people who rely on Planned Parenthood voted for that right because they trusted it would mean something in their lives. We are asking you to make sure it does.

Paula Thornton Greear

President and CEO

Planned Parenthood of Michigan and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan

On behalf of the Boards of Directors of Planned Parenthood of Michigan and Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan

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Planned Parenthood offers affordable reproductive health care for all people through medical services, education and advocacy and is the nation's leading sexual and reproductive health care advocate and provider. Planned Parenthood of Michigan operates health centers across the state, providing medical services and sexuality education for nearly 60,000 Michiganders each year.

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan (PPAM) is the advocacy arm of Planned Parenthood of Michigan. PPAM works in conjunction with Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Fund at the national level, as well as our health center/education affiliate Planned Parenthood of Michigan, supporters, and patients at the state level to ensure access to reproductive health for all Michiganders.