



## The Wisconsin Medicaid Family Planning Waiver

**The Family Planning Waiver is a Medicaid Program which provides family planning services, such as cancer screenings, annual pap exams, contraceptive counseling and services and sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and treatment for low-income women. In the last quarter of 2003 alone, the Family Planning Waiver saved the state \$3.3 million by preventing 1,278 unintended pregnancies.**

Last legislative session, several bills were introduced that would have gutted the FPW for the 55,515 women currently included in the program who are in need of diagnostic and preventative health care services. This legislation is expected again in the 2005 session, as Senator Glenn Grothman has declared it his top priority. In the past, these bills have called for an exclusion of women age 15-17, which would dismantle the current FPW and require the state to expend time and resources in attempting to obtain a revised or new FPW, which can not be guaranteed by the federal government.

### THE FPW PROVIDES NEEDED HEALTH CARE TO WOMEN

- The FPW provides basic diagnostic and preventative health care services to low-income women, such as:
  - Cervical cancer screens and breast exams
  - Sexually transmitted infection prevention, diagnosis and treatment. Wisconsin has the second highest Chlamydia rate in the country.
  - Access to family planning services, such as birth control. Under federal and state law, no public monies can be used to provide abortion services.
- Publicly supported family planning programs reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions, reduce the transmission of STIs, and promote early detection of cancer.
  - It is estimated that Wisconsin's family planning clinics avert 35,200 unintended pregnancies and **17,600 abortions each year** (Alan Guttmacher Institute).
  - Without the FPW, Wisconsin's current system of family planning providers cannot meet the need for these services. The FPW plugs some of this hole. Since January, 2003, almost 55,515 women have been enrolled in the FPW.

### THE FPW HELPS ALLEVIATE THE HEALTH CARE CRISIS IN OUR STATE & SAVES WISCONSIN TAXPAYERS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

- The federal government pays 90% of the FPW, attracting more than \$41 million (\$8.2 million for 5 years) desperately needed federal dollars into Wisconsin. This comes at a time when the state is on the verge of a serious Medicaid budget deficit.
- The FPW program saves approximately \$13.2 million each year by preventing unintended pregnancies.

- The latest Department of Health and Family Services fiscal estimate found that in final quarter of 2003, the FPW saved the state \$3.3 million by preventing unintended pregnancies. Also in that quarter, the FPW services prevented 1,278 unintended pregnancies.
- The Waiver saves taxpayers' money by preventing teen pregnancy.
  - 85% of teen births in Wisconsin are paid for by Wisconsin taxpayers. The national average cost for each teen birth and attended expenses is \$79,320.

### **THE FPW PREVENTS TEEN PREGNANCY AND STIS**

- FPW is estimated to reduce teen pregnancy by 15%. In 2002, approximately 6,800 Wisconsin teens gave birth.
- Most recent studies on teen pregnancy (by the National Campaign for the Prevention of Teen Pregnancy) confirm that access to birth control is a key component to preventing teen pregnancy. These studies also confirm that access to birth control does not encourage sexual activity.
- An 2002 Wisconsin study that appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association concluded that mandatory parental notification for prescriptive contraceptives would not curtail a teen's sexual activities, but rather thwart a minor's willingness to seek crucial information on and services for preventing pregnancy and sexual transmitted infections.
  - 59% of minors indicated that they would stop using all sexual health care services, delay testing or treatment for HIV or other sexually transmitted infections, or discontinue use of specific sexual health care services if their parents were informed that they were seeking prescribed contraceptives.
  - 47% of minors responded that they would stop using all family planning services if their parents were notified that they were seeking prescribed birth control pills or devices. 99% of this population, however, indicated that they would continue having sexual intercourse.
- Minors have a legally recognized right to confidential family planning services under all Medicaid programs. State parental consent laws for access to family planning services under Medicaid have been struck down by courts throughout the country.

### **THE FPW HAS BI-PARTISAN SUPPORT**

In 1997, the FPW was approved by the Legislature on a bi-partisan vote. Assembly Speaker John Gard and Senate Leader Mary Panzer voted for the program, as did Senators Robert Cowles, Sheila Harsdorf and Representatives Cheryl Albers, John Gard, Scott Jensen and Dean Kaufert. Then Governor Tommy Thompson signed the bill into law and approved the program as Secretary of HHS in June, 2002.