

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Ranking Member Greg Walden**

***Protecting Title X and Safeguarding Quality Family Planning Care***

**June 19, 2019**

Thank you, Chair DeGette, for holding this hearing.

The Title X family planning program has played a critical role in ensuring access to a broad range of family planning and preventive health services for nearly 50 years. While the Title X program is the only federal program dedicated solely to supporting the delivery of family planning and related preventive health care, there are many different federal funding sources for family planning services. Some of these other important programs include Medicaid, the Health Center Program, Maternal and Child Health Block Grants, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. In Fiscal Year 2015, Medicaid accounted for about 75 percent of public family planning expenditures in the United States while Title X accounted for about 10 percent.

Although the Title X program only accounts for a small percentage of the public funding expenditures for family planning services, it is an important program, especially for low-income women across the country. According to the most recent Family Planning Annual Report data, Title X-funded sites in Oregon served 44,815 Oregonians in 2017, including 41,952 women. Of the Oregonians that received Title X services in 2017, about 42,000 had incomes at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. The types of services that Oregonians received through the Title X program include, but are not limited to, family planning services such as education, counseling, contraception, and clinical services, STD testing and treatment, and HIV testing.

I was pleased to see that HHS awarded the Oregon Health Authority Reproductive Health Program over 3 million dollars in Title X funds for Fiscal Year 2019. OHA's sub-grantees include community health departments and community health centers across my district. Community health centers are an important component of the Title X network—these centers provide comprehensive primary care for the entire family.

Given the important services Americans receive under the Title X program, I am glad that we have HHS here today to learn more about the recent actions relating to the Title X program and how they think these changes will impact the program and the services offered under the program.

When Congress created the Title X program, Congress explicitly stated that, and I quote, “none of the funds appropriated under the title shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning.” It is important that federal programs are implemented and operated in ways that are consistent with the statutory language, and I am therefore interested in knowing

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about any challenges HHS has faced in overseeing the Title X program and why they decided to make the recent changes to the Title X program.

Many patients and physicians have come to rely on the Title X program since it was created in 1970, which is why it is critical that changes to the program do not harm patient access to the important services that Congress intended to be provided under the program. I've heard concerns from some groups such as the National Association of Community Health Centers that the recent changes to the program could potentially harm access to care for some individuals, and I hope that HHS can address some of those concerns today.

While a major focus of the Title X program is to provide grants to clinical service providers, the program also supports other priorities and initiatives at HHS such as HHS' initiative to identify and provide solutions to reduce substance abuse disorders and assisting the government's response to infectious disease outbreaks that impact the ability of individuals to achieve healthy pregnancies, like the Zika virus. While these elements of the program are not likely to be a focus of our conversation today, I am interested in hearing more about them and whether there are any issues that affect family planning projects that currently are not addressed by the Title X program.

Thank you, and I yield back.