

**Comments of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England  
on the Healthcare Cabinet Recommendations on Prescription Drugs**

Connecticut has only recently begun to see and reap the significant benefits of the Affordable Care Act's inclusion of contraceptives without copayment as an *essential preventive benefit*. Prior to this policy, full coverage for prescription contraceptives was uneven, and tiered formularies and copayments were common, making it less likely that women (who bear the brunt of this reproductive health cost) would routinely purchase and use the most effective methods of pregnancy prevention. *Virtually all sexually active women use contraception during their reproductive lives*. It is a necessity.

The ACA has ushered in a new day, and State Health Department statistics show that unintended pregnancy, teen births and abortions are plummeting (both here and nationwide), thanks to access to the most effective contraceptives without out-of-pocket costs as a barrier to regular compliance.

Reductions in unplanned pregnancies ultimately represent savings to the State on the costs associated with pregnancy, prenatal care, delivery and early childhood.

The most effective contraceptives, called LARCS (long acting reversible contraceptives) are the more recent to emerge in the marketplace and the costliest at the outset (although, over time, no more costly than other hormonal methods). High initial cost sharing for the commercially insured consumer would have, prior to the ACA, made a LARC difficult to afford, even with coverage. Coverage without cost sharing puts these most effective methods within reach for everyone who wants or needs one... the public health benefit impacts us all. Women with coverage for contraceptives without copayments are more likely to choose and use more effective forms of contraception, including long-acting reversibles, Depo Provera and oral contraceptives.

Planned Parenthood joins other health care advocates in asking Connecticut to take action to insure that the escalating costs of prescription drugs be brought under control. We support the Healthcare Cabinet in its important work on this front.



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