

Blocking Patients from Health Care by “Defunding” Planned Parenthood

[SB 160](#) - Sen. Schroer, R-2 (St. Charles) | [SJR 8](#) - Sen. Eigel, R-23 (St. Charles)
[HB 10](#) and [HB 11](#) - Rep. Smith, R-163 (Carthage)

These “defunding” proposals discriminate against patients who rely on publicly funded health care, like Medicaid, by blocking them from using their health insurance for preventive services at any health center affiliated with an abortion provider. This is a direct attack on Planned Parenthood and the patients who trust and rely on Planned Parenthood for their health care. Missouri communities already face extreme disparities in access to health care. These attacks strain our state’s overstretched health care safety net, defy federal law and the Missouri Supreme Court, and jeopardize federal funding for Missouri’s entire Medicaid program.

VIOLATING FEDERAL LAW and DEFYING COURT RULINGS

These bills risk the funding for Missouri’s entire Medicaid program.

- Barring Medicaid patients from choosing Planned Parenthood for health care services violates Medicaid’s “free choice of provider” requirement, a federal law that says patients have the right to choose their own health care provider.
- Violating the “free choice of provider” requirement **puts Missouri at risk of losing all federal Medicaid dollars.**
- [The Missouri Supreme Court already ruled it is unlawful](#) for lawmakers to use the budget process to block Medicaid patients from picking their own health care providers.

PLAYING POLITICS WITH PATIENTS’ ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL CARE

Let’s be clear: Saying this is about abortion is disingenuous. This is about Missourians’ access to birth control, cancer screenings, and STI testing and treatment. Not abortion.

- These politicians don’t care that they will be denying Missourians preventive services they need to stay healthy and safe — **they want to score political points by targeting Planned Parenthood.** This is cruel and irresponsible.
- Whether it’s by budget bill, statute or constitutional amendment, these measures are aimed at one thing: **politicizing Planned Parenthood, at the expense of Missouri patients’ access to birth control, cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and other preventive health care.**
- Abortion is health care and should be accessible and covered by all insurance plans, including Medicaid, but Missouri currently has an abortion ban in effect and state law *already* bars Medicaid from covering abortion.

UNDERMINING MISSOURI'S HEALTH CARE SAFETY NET

Missouri's safety net cannot keep up without Planned Parenthood health centers, which provide high-quality health care that is both accessible and comprehensive to thousands of patients a year.

- Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri (PPSLRSWMO) health centers provide expert, high-quality sexual and reproductive health care, including cancer screenings and the full range of birth control options. **Nearly 20% of PPSLRSWMO's Missouri health center patients rely on Medicaid for their care coverage.**
- Planned Parenthood serves 52% of all family planning patients who rely on Title X, The Right Time, and Medicaid providers in the Missouri Family Health Council's (MFHC) family planning network.
- Any suggestion that Missouri's health care infrastructure can support these displaced patients is simply wrong — there aren't enough sexual and reproductive health care providers to fill the gap.

WORSENING PUBLIC HEALTH CRISES

Attacking Planned Parenthood services will disproportionately hurt Missouri communities who are already facing disparities in access to health care, in addition to the pandemic.

- **Missouri has a statewide and ongoing syphilis outbreak.** The number of early syphilis cases in Missouri increased [259%](#) between 2015 and 2021. Planned Parenthood has ramped up testing for syphilis and provided treatment for patients.
- Missouri's maternal mortality rate is increasing, and parts of the state have infant mortality rates higher than those in developing countries. **Black women in Missouri are three to four times more likely than white women to die from preventable pregnancy complications.**
- Politicians know exactly who they're going after — women and people of color who disproportionately rely on publicly funded programs like Medicaid.
- **Access to preventive care is more critical than ever in this post-Roe world.** Denying people access to Planned Parenthood's services will irresponsibly worsen public health disparities.

Despite repeated legislative efforts to “defund” Planned Parenthood and discriminate against patients by preventing them from choosing their own health care providers, Planned Parenthood continues to offer vital preventive care to Missourians. These attacks on Missouri's health care safety net are not sustainable. **This is the time to *expand* access to care, not block patients from getting birth control, cancer screenings, and STI testing at Planned Parenthood.**