



Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

Public Policy Overview

Updated September 2023

Health Care Equity


All people should have equal access to health care. And yet people of color, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ people (especially those whose identities intersect) are disproportionately impacted by restrictions on that care. For many, due to our country's long history of systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and classism, birth control and abortion are out of reach because of their income, where they live, or because their boss objects to it.

Reproductive health equity gives people the resources and access they need to have a fair chance at sexual and reproductive well-being and autonomy. That means your race, ethnicity, gender, income, sexual orientation, immigration status, or neighborhood does not disadvantage you from accessing the quality and affordable health care services you need to live a life of reproductive health.

Abortion Access

Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey believes that everyone should be able to plan their families, without interference and without facing insurmountable barriers or fears of shame or stigma. When people can make decisions that are best for their lives, families thrive and we build communities where each of us can participate with dignity and equality.

Since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned in June 2022, Planned Parenthood health centers in New Jersey have continued to do everything in their power to increase access to abortion. **One year post-Roe, as of June 2023, 20 states and counting have banned or severely limited abortion, creating a patchwork of abortion access throughout the country.**



New Jersey legislators and members of the administration have made great strides to protect and expand reproductive health care in New Jersey. Over the past two years, the state has accomplished the following:

- The Legislature passed the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act, which codified the right to an abortion in New Jersey statute.
- The Legislature passed two legal protection bills. The first bars the extradition of people seeking abortion in New Jersey. The second bill protects people seeking abortion in New Jersey who travel here from states where it is illegal, protects health information from forceful distribution from centers in New Jersey, and protects the licenses of abortion providers.
- The Department of Banking and Insurance released a new rule requiring all insurance plans regulated by the state to cover abortion.
- The Board of Medical Examiners expanded the abortion provider pool by allowing advanced practice clinicians to provide abortions.

As we continue to navigate our post-Roe world, we know there is more to do to continue to expand access to abortion in New Jersey. Some expansions Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey is fighting for include:

- Addressing cost-sharing and affordability of abortion coverage.
- Addressing increased protest activity. Unfortunately, protests are common at many of Planned Parenthood's health centers (and other abortion providers in the state). These protests are upsetting to patients and disruptive to care. Englewood, in Bergen County, established an 8-foot buffer zone around an abortion provider in that municipality, which has been upheld by the District Court. In an example from a neighboring state, Pittsburgh, PA established a 15-foot buffer zone around the city's reproductive health care providers, which has been upheld by the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals, which also covers New Jersey.
- Codifying the provider expansions put into place by the Board of Medical Examiners.
- Codifying the Department of Banking and Insurance mandate that requires all New Jersey insurance plans to cover abortion care and without cost-sharing.

Family Planning

Planned Parenthood knows firsthand that access to affordable birth control, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV, and lifesaving cancer screenings changes lives, benefiting individuals, families, and communities. Studies have shown that birth control has expanded opportunities for women through increased economic and educational advancement, and improved their health and well-being.

Protecting access to reproductive health services isn't just about keeping politicians from interfering with an individual's personal medical decisions. It also requires us to ensure that all patients have access to the reproductive health services they need, regardless of their income. Ensuring strong and diverse family planning funding streams in New Jersey is key to helping support patients. These funding streams work together to ensure a strong safety net for family planning patients and providers in the state of New Jersey.

- The New Jersey Department of Health grants **state** funding to the New Jersey Family Planning League, who then distributes this funding to 15 providers across the state, including FQHCs, local health departments, Planned Parenthood health centers, and other nonprofit family planning service providers. This funding comes from our state's annual budget. In 2023, the New Jersey legislature and Governor Murphy made historic state investments in family planning, and issued grants for training, security, and facilities for reproductive health providers. Additionally, the state increased funding for Medicaid reimbursements for family planning services, the first increase in decades. We are grateful that elected officials in New Jersey understand the importance of investing in these critical services.
- **Federal** funding is received through the Title X program. This funding is also granted to the New Jersey Family Planning League who again distributes it to providers across the state. Title X is a national program to help support patients' access to care, regardless of income.
- Medicaid is a form of **insurance coverage** for people living with incomes under 138% of the federal poverty level (approximately \$41,400 for a family of four). Medicaid reimburses Planned Parenthood for health care services it provides, just like other health care providers.

Sex Education

Young people deserve to have the information, resources, and skills they need to protect their health and build their future – without shame or judgment. Sex education has a proven track record of helping young people develop the knowledge and skills they need to make healthy decisions about their relationships, their health, and their future.

In 2020, Under the administration of Governor Murphy, New Jersey's Department of Education adopted new and more comprehensive standards regarding sex education. These standards include information on sexual health, contraceptive measures, STI prevention, and gender identity. While the new standards are a step in the right direction, there is still more that needs to be done to protect New Jersey students' right to comprehensive sex education. Old laws still exist which harmfully limit the scope of sex education lessons throughout the state, and these laws must be overturned and replaced with new, more inclusive legislation. We must also invest more in teacher training and resources for schools to provide sex education.

In recent years, there have been attacks on sex education by those opposed to ensuring our state's young people have access to age-appropriate, medically accurate information. Many of these attacks have specifically focused on LGBTQ+ identities. Here in New Jersey we are seeing coordinated attacks at the school district level to out LGBTQ+ students, ban books written by LGBTQ+ authors or uplifting LGBTQ+ narratives, and remove LGBTQ+ topics from sex education. These attacks are political, based on misinformation, and dangerous to our communities. Policies that prevent fact-based, age-appropriate instruction about LGBTQ+ people not only prevent students from getting the education they deserve, it also puts LGBTQ+ students at risk by stigmatizing them. Comprehensive sex education allows children to understand that LGBTQ+ individuals and families are part of their community and teach students to respect people who are different from them. **By making schools a safe place to learn no matter how you identify, the standards in New Jersey help protect all kids.**

Young people deserve to have the information, resources, and skills they need to protect their health and build their future – without shame or judgment. Sex education can equip young people with the skills they need for a lifetime of good health, including the ability to have healthy relationships, make decisions for themselves, think critically about the world, be a good ally to those who are marginalized, and love themselves for who they are.

Maternal Health

According to the CDC, Black women are up to four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than non-Hispanic white women. New Jersey ranks 47th in maternal deaths and demonstrates some of the worst racial disparities between Black and white women in the U.S.

We must invest in transforming our health care system to address the root causes of inequality and support pregnant people. Quality health care must be accessible to all and requires transformational change to address a system that has a long history of especially failing Black and Latinx people and their babies. The good news is that New Jersey has successfully expanded Medicaid postpartum coverage to a year following birth. Our state has also, under the leadership of the First Lady, developed a comprehensive Nurture NJ Strategic Plan to improve maternal and infant health outcomes specifically focusing on the impact of racism within the health care system.

Anti-Abortion Centers

Anti-abortion centers (AACs), also known as crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs), are anti-abortion organizations that attempt to coerce, deceive, and manipulate pregnant people into carrying pregnancies to term. AACs are known to have provided pregnant people and minors with biased and inaccurate information and purposely misled them into thinking that they were getting health care.

AACs are widely considered to be unethical by health care professionals, including by groups like the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Medical Association (AMA). AACs have been known to intentionally market themselves as legitimate reproductive health centers to deceive pregnant patients into believing they will get comprehensive care and information. Instead, staff at AACs use tactics to delay access to qualified medical professionals for time-sensitive services. Tactics include lying about gestational ages, mischaracterizing local abortion laws, or dissuading pregnant people from obtaining an abortion, using shaming or referring to debunked abortion safety studies. Several states provide state funding for AACs, although New Jersey currently does not.

In December 2022, the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs put out a [consumer alert](#) regarding AACs, encouraging patients to report fraudulent, deceptive, misleading, or unlawful conduct.

How to Take Action

Visit our website, ppactionnj.org, to get connected to key ways you can take action in the fight to protect and expand access to reproductive health care services and information.

- Visit the [Events](#) page on our website to see all our upcoming events.
- [Sign up](#) to receive emails from PPAF NJ to get all the latest news.
- [Share your story](#) with us and make your voice heard.
- [Host a fundraiser](#) and empower your friends, family, and neighbors to take action too.

**Thank you for all that you do to support
reproductive freedom for all!**