



House Health Care- FY26 Budget Request

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February 19th, 2025

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England proudly serves nearly 16,000 patients in over 23,000 visits across seven health centers—in Burlington, Williston, St. Johnsbury, Barre, White River Junction, Rutland, and Brattleboro—as well as statewide through our telehealth program. Every day, people turn to us for compassionate, high-quality, and affordable reproductive and sexual health care, including wellness exams, birth control, STI testing and treatment, cancer screenings, abortion care, gender-affirming care, and essential primary care services. No one is turned away based on their ability to pay. In fact, 54% of our patients have low incomes, and last year alone, we provided \$1.3 million in free and discounted care to Vermont communities—a significant increase from \$802,000 the previous year.

Many of our patients tell us we are the only health care provider they see all year. In short, we are a safety net provider for patients who struggle the most. Not only is our care affordable, it is also highly rated. In our most recent after-visit surveys, patients gave us an overall mean score of 97.5 out of 100 for “Likelihood to recommend.”

One patient said, “I’ve never been more grateful for such an affordable and quality healthcare option. I will always recommend Planned Parenthood.”

Our ability to continue offering this high quality, affordable care is in dire jeopardy. A significantly broken health care system coupled with endless political attacks at the national level, has left Planned Parenthood of Northern New England with a funding gap of more than \$8.6 million over the next three years. Despite all of our internal efforts to achieve financial stability, this budget crisis could get much worse with the

*Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (PPNNE) is the largest provider of reproductive and sexual health care across the state of Vermont. We serve **patients** through 7 health centers in St. Johnsbury, Rutland, Brattleboro, Barre, Burlington, Williston, and White River Junction and virtually through our Telehealth program. Last year we saw more than 16,000 patients at these sites. [PPNNE was named a 2021 Guardian of Excellence Award® winner](#) by [Press Ganey](#), the national leader in health care consumer and workforce engagement. Press Ganey recognizes PPNNE as a top-performing health care organization, achieving the 95th percentile or above for performance in patient experience, out of more than 20,000 medical practices.*

Trump Administration, which has already promised to slash our funding and remove us from programs that serve low-income Vermonters.

Budget Requests

We have two requests for you today, both of which are relatively modest, recognizing the extreme need the entire health care system has, but would also maximize our ability to keep our doors open for all Vermonters.

1. Family Planning Medicaid Rate Increases

Medicaid provides an enhanced federal match rate of 90/10 for family planning services, meaning that the federal government would be covering 90% of the increased rate.

By creating a Medicaid Supplemental Reimbursement for Core Family Planning Services for family planning providers in Vermont, we can utilize that federal match.

- With a modest state investment of approximately **\$85,317**, we have an opportunity to leverage a 9:1 federal match, unlocking \$853,168 in additional funding for essential services for PPNNE.

2. State Family Planning Program

PPNNE currently receives \$760,000 annually in Title X funds. We expect another attempt to institute a gag rule on Title X funds, the nation's family planning program similar to the one under the previous Trump Administration. Title X guarantees patients with low incomes have access to basic, preventive reproductive health care. Losing Title X funding would add to our funding gap and would harm patients' ability to receive care at a sliding-fee discount.

- We are asking for the state to develop its own **family planning program for low-income Vermonters** using the same structure and guidelines we currently follow under Title X but with a state investment so that Vermonters' ability access this care is no longer subject to changing federal administrative rules.

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Safe Harbor Fund - H.214

Finally, while this is not a budget ask and carries no state appropriation, we hope that this committee will **take up and pass H. 214 to establish a Safe Harbor fund.**

Patients seeking abortion care in Vermont often face financial barriers related to childcare, travel, lodging, and lost wages. Financial burdens should never impact someone's ability to receive care. Those holding the most marginalized identities are often the most impacted. This means those who are BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, immigrants, those living in poverty and people living in rural areas are most impacted by the barriers to access health care. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nearly two thirds of Vermonters live in what would be classified as rural areas. **A Safe Harbor fund would help remove barriers and improve health outcomes.**

Conclusions

Access to family planning services strengthens entire communities. Not only are these proposed solutions the right thing to do to protect the most vulnerable people in our state, they are smart investments. **Every dollar invested in family planning saves the state \$4 dollars and 83 cents.**

These services empower individuals, support families, and create a healthier, more economically stable Vermont. We recognize the challenges facing our health care system, and we believe that working together – providers, policymakers, and community members – will help us build stronger, more equitable care for all. Our patients – our neighbors – are in need of support like never before. Vermonters overwhelmingly support access to sexual and reproductive health care - investing in this care makes good fiscal sense for the state.

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