

## **Family Planning Funding Emergency** *An \$8 Million Hole in the Health Care Safety Net*

**Low-income Washingtonians are suffering because of a funding crisis.** Changes in federal policy have restricted the availability of family planning and created significant barriers for people seeking services like birth control, sexually transmitted disease testing and treatment, annual exams, cancer screening, and pregnancy testing. However, family planning clinics continue to see steady numbers of low-income uninsured and underinsured clients walking through their doors who cannot afford to pay for health services on their own.

**This has created an \$8 million hole in the health care safety net for low-income Washingtonians, and an unsustainable funding gap for family planning providers.**

### ***The Problem:***

- Recent federal policy changes to Washington's Medicaid family planning waiver program, Take Charge, have restricted access to services. **Between May 2005 and July 2007 there has been a 30% of Take Charge enrollees have been dropped.**
- The 30% of low-income Washingtonians who are no longer eligible for Take Charge family planning services have not gone away. Some are still receiving services either on a sliding-fee-for-service pay scale or without the ability to pay at all, with providers absorbing the cost of these visits. Others are simply not receiving services. **The result is \$8 million annually in family planning services that are no longer being provided through public funds – both patients and providers are suffering.**
- In 2007 Washington's legislature attempted to stem this problem with a biennial allocation of \$5 million for family planning. Unfortunately, with a minimum gap of \$8 million per year, this funding was spent in the first year of the biennium with a gap still remaining, and no funding is available for the second year. **\$8 Million in supplemental budget funding for family planning is essential to maintain services for low-income Washingtonians.**
- Approximately 54% of pregnancies are unintended in Washington, according to DOH. If 54% of those Washingtonians no longer covered by Take Charge become pregnant, **it could result in \$125.8 million in costs for pregnancy care. Covering a minimum level of family planning services for those no longer covered by Take Charge would cost only \$8 million per year.**
- **Washington's family planning problem is larger than this year's budget.** Family planning is basic health care, and yet it is often left out of discussions on the health care safety net. *When some women must become pregnant before qualifying for publicly funded services, there's clearly a problem.* Washington needs standards, for who is eligible for family planning assistance, and what services are covered.

### ***The Solution:***

**Head off the family planning funding emergency! Ensure that \$8 million is included in the 2008 supplemental budget for low-income Washingtonians' basic family planning health care!**