



Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey

Public Policy Overview

Updated September 2022

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.

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. 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 non-profit family planning service providers. This funding comes from our state's annual budget. In 2022, the New Jersey legislature and Governor Murphy made historic investments in family planning funding. 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. Recently, the Biden-Harris administration reversed some harmful rule changes that kept providers like Planned Parenthood locked out of the program.
- **Medicaid** is a form of insurance coverage for people living with incomes under 138% of the federal poverty level (approximately \$36,570 a year for a family of four). Medicaid reimburses Planned Parenthood for health care services it provides, just like other health care providers.

Abortion Access

In June 2022, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the Supreme Court stripped us of our federal right to access abortion by overturning *Roe v. Wade*. This devastating decision has created a hostile, dangerous, and ever-changing landscape for abortion rights across the country. Millions of people now live in a state where abortion is illegal, and many are being forced to travel hundreds of miles out of state or remain pregnant against their will.

Abortion bans disproportionately harm Black, Indigenous, Latino, and other people of color. *Roe* was never enough. Barriers to accessing abortion and other health care services have always existed because of this country's legacy of racism and discrimination.

Abortion remains legal and protected in New Jersey thanks to the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act (FRCA). This law, signed by Governor Murphy in January 2022, affirms the right of every New Jerseyan to make their own decisions about abortion, birth control, and pregnancy. But while we celebrate the protection of our rights through the FRCA, there is still much more to do to expand access to abortion in New Jersey, because one cannot exercise their right if they cannot meaningfully access the care they need.

In order to increase access to abortion in New Jersey, champion legislators have introduced the **Reproductive Equity Act (S2918/A4350)**. The Reproductive Equity Act (REA) will meaningfully expand access to abortion in New Jersey by breaking down barriers to care so that everyone – regardless of income, insurance coverage, or immigration status – can access the care they need and deserve.

This legislation goes beyond just safeguarding our rights alone. It ensures that everyone can actually exercise those rights, and access the care they need to make their own personal decisions about their bodies and their lives.

The Reproductive Equity Act accomplishes this vision in three main ways:

1. Mandates that insurance plans in New Jersey cover abortion and birth control with no cost sharing or out of pocket costs, just like NY, ME, IL, CA, OR and WA have done;
2. Expands existing state programs that cover birth control and pregnancy-related care to also cover abortion services for those who face financial barriers; and
3. Establishes in state law, not just regulation, that all qualified providers such as advanced practice clinicians can provide abortions in New Jersey to ensure there continues to be increased access to trained and qualified abortion providers across the state.

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.

Under the administration of Governor Murphy, New Jersey's Department of Education has recently adopted new and more comprehensive standards regarding sex education. These standards include important information on sexual health, contraceptive measures, STI prevention, and gender identity. While the new standards are moving 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.

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 in New Jersey. 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.

COVID-19

Women, especially women of color, are bearing the burden of the COVID-19 crisis, which is why Planned Parenthood is part of the national We Demand More coalition. This coalition is urging Congress to prioritize our health and safety ahead of corporations; get life-sustaining relief to us now; make state governments strong; and stop the attacks on our reproductive health care, including abortion.

Planned Parenthood in New Jersey is also doing our part to keep our community healthy, strong, and protected against COVID-19, including providing free rapid testing and vaccines at many health centers. Learn more at covid19.practionnj.org.

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 [**Take Action**](#) page on our website to see all our upcoming events.
- [**Sign up**](#) to receive emails from PPAFNJ 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 stand with Planned Parenthood!