

Blocking Patients from Health Care by “Defunding” Planned Parenthood

[SB 398](#) & [SJR 18](#) - [Sen. Eigel](#) (R-23, St. Charles)

[HB 635](#) - [Rep. Schroer](#) (R-107, O’Fallon) • [HB 10](#) - [Rep. Smith](#) (R-163, Carthage)

In the midst of a global pandemic, politicians are attacking Planned Parenthood patients, defying the Missouri Supreme Court, and jeopardizing federal funding for Missouri’s entire Medicaid program.

These bills, designed to attack Planned Parenthood patients, could risk the funding for Missouri’s entire Medicaid program.

- Federal law protects Medicaid patients’ right to choose their own health care provider.
- Barring Medicaid patients from choosing Planned Parenthood for health care services violates Medicaid’s “free choice of provider” provision.

Extremist lawmakers are defying the Missouri Supreme Court, which ruled the Missouri Legislature unlawfully used the budget to “defund” Planned Parenthood health centers.

- In a June 2020 ruling, the Missouri Supreme Court was clear that it is unlawful for the state legislature to use the budget process to let politicians pick doctors rather than allow patients to pick their own health care providers.

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

- Current law *already* bars this family planning funding from going to abortion — but politicians are so obsessed with abortion that they cut access to preventive care anyway.
- Preventive care reduces unintended pregnancies and keeps Missourians healthy and safe.

Whether it’s by budget bill, statute or constitutional amendment, these measures are aimed at one thing: **Preventing Missouri patients from getting birth control, cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and other health care at Planned Parenthood.**

- These measures block patients who rely on any help from the state to access health care or are insured by MO HealthNet, Missouri’s Medicaid program, from choosing their own health care providers.
- The bills discriminate against patients and block them from using their health insurance at any health center affiliated with an abortion provider — and Planned Parenthood is the biggest target.
- This bill will particularly impact Missouri communities that are already facing extreme disparities in access to health care, and are in especially vulnerable circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **“Defunding” Planned Parenthood means fewer patients access the health care they need.** [Participation in the program has decreased by nearly 35%](#) since politicians excluded Planned Parenthood health centers and other providers.

Planned Parenthood is a crucial component of Missouri’s health care safety net, providing thousands of patients high-quality care that is both accessible and comprehensive.

- 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.
- All 11 Planned Parenthood health centers in Missouri offer Pap tests and the full range of birth control options, including long-acting reversible contraception (LARCs). This is compared to [only 18% of ob/gyns](#) who offer the full range of non-permanent birth control methods.

In addition to the pandemic, Missouri has a statewide syphilis outbreak and rising rates of maternal mortality — this is the time to *expand* access to care, not block patients from getting birth control, cancer screenings, and STI testing at Planned Parenthood.

- The number of early syphilis cases in Missouri increased 218% between 2012 and 2017.
- The state of Missouri has recognized this public health threat. When it came time to find providers to treat this outbreak, *they came to Planned Parenthood*. Planned Parenthood has answered the call, ramping up testing for syphilis and providing 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 to die from preventable pregnancy complications.

Blocking patients’ access to Planned Parenthood health centers will not improve Missourians’ health — in fact, it will only make things worse.