



Senator Austen, Senator Bradley, Representative Walker, Representative Dillon, members of the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for giving up your Friday evening to listen to the residents of the state of CT. Your commitment to us is truly appreciated.

My name is a Dr. Suzanne Lagarde and I am the CEO of Fair Haven Community Health Care in New Haven. I am here to speak to the item in Governor Lamont's budget relating to those health care agencies, like my own, which have turned down Title X, Family Planning, funding from the federal government.

Nearly 50 years ago, Fair Haven Community Health Clinic was founded as a Family Planning Clinic. Residents of the Fair Haven neighborhood in New Haven recognized the importance of quality family planning and banded together to form our health facility, which today serves nearly 18,000 men, women and children annually. For these past 50 years, we have never wavered from our original mission to serve women and men who want to responsibly manage their reproductive health. For literally decades we enjoyed a wonderful partnership with Planned Parenthood of Southern New England. Planned Parenthood received funds directly through the Title X program and we were a subgrantee of Planned Parenthood, receiving on average close to \$200,000 yearly to provide care to our patients. We provided—and continue to provide--contraceptive care, treatment of STDs and science based advice regarding family planning to literally tens of thousands of patients over these many years. It was a great relationship which benefitted so many patients in southern CT.

Then 2017 arrived and a new administration assumed power in Washington DC. In addition to threats of defunding Planned Parenthood, the current administration drastically cut funding overall, effective the spring of 2018. We saw our funding go from roughly \$200,000 annually to \$75,000 annually. Despite this significant cut in funding, we managed to continue to provide the same level of family planning services which includes providing FREE contraceptives to all of our uninsured patients. Fair Haven Community Health Care serves a large uninsured patient population, over 23% of our roughly 18,000 patients are uninsured. This translates into the fact that in 2019 alone, we purchased and provided free of charge, both oral and injectable contraceptives as well as IUDs, to nearly 4000 patients. It should be obvious that the reduction in funding from nearly \$200,000 annually to \$75,000 annually was a big hit—we managed to keep the program intact but it was a financial struggle, siphoning limited dollars away from other important programs.

But things got even worse. The current administration then instituted the so-called "Gag Rule". This rule which went into effect in the spring of 2018, prevents doctors and nurses from referring patients for abortions. Our providers were now legally prevented from discussing abortion as one of several options available to women who might be struggling with the news of an unwanted pregnancy. This was a game changer. FHCHC's leadership together with unanimous support from our Board of Directors, felt that

this intrusion into the doctor patient relationship was unacceptable and was detrimental to patient care. So, in the summer of 2019, we gave up our Title X funding.

Currently we have no funding to support our Family Planning efforts and I am proud to report to you that so far, we have not cut back on services. We continue to serve over 4500 patients annually and we continue to purchase and distribute free of charge, contraceptives to all of our uninsured patients. However, this is a struggle which comes at the expense of other programs. The allocation of funds in an organization like ours is always a balancing act. We truly rob from Peter to pay Paul, in other words, take funds from one program to support another and our current support of our Family Planning program is a classic example of this.

It was against this background that earlier this month, I learned that Governor Lamont had put money into his proposed budget to provide some relief to agencies like mine, which are committed to providing high quality family planning services but who refuse to detract from the relationship between doctor and patient as mandated by the Gag Rule. We are thrilled that our government and this administration share our commitment to low income women in our community and has stepped forward to help mitigate this problem. So I am here to publicly say “thank you” to Governor Lamont and his administration for this show of solidarity in the face of a federal government which has turned its back on women, especially women of color.

While I am most appreciative, the sad fact remains that the cost of the services we provide far exceeds the amount being proposed for our health center. While the Governor is suggesting we receive \$80,000, attached data shows that our costs for this program for literally decades has exceeded \$200,000 annually. We respectfully request that serious consideration be given to increasing the amount of funding to Fair Haven Community Health Care to \$180,000.

Gratefully submitted

Suzanne Lagarde MD MBA FACP
Chief Executive Officer
Fair Haven Community Health Care
New Haven CT 06518
(p) 203 752 5129

Attachment

Title X Data, Fair Haven Community Health Care

Number of Title X VISITS, 2016 through 2019

VISITS	2016	2017	2018	2019
Female	8658	8326	7624	7503
Male	838	867	856	982
Total Visits	9496	9193	8480	8485

Number of Title X PATIENTS seen annually, 2016 through 2019

PATIENTS	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total Unduplicated Patients between 2016 and 2019
Female	4183	4172	3984	3911	8304
Male	736	767	765	883	2627

10,931 unique patients treated for Family Planning Services in 35,654 visits 2016 through 2019

Expenses vs. funding amounts, 2008 through 2019, with associated deficit

Year	Title X		
	Grant Funds	Expenses	
2020	\$0		
2019	\$75,906	205,898	(\$129,992)
2018	\$181,814	247,988	(\$66,174)
2017	\$181,814	193,247	(\$11,433)
2016	\$181,814	230,904	(\$49,090)
2015	\$181,814	249,994	(\$68,180)
2014	\$181,814	248,644	(\$66,830)
2013	\$183,814	242,394	(\$58,580)
2012	\$202,016	249,779	(\$47,763)
2011	\$206,139	268,453	(\$62,314)
2010	\$213,824	266,333	(\$52,509)
2009	\$206,250	257,813	(\$51,563)
2008	\$214,665	247,854	(\$33,189)
	<u>\$2,211,684</u>	<u>2,909,301.00</u>	<u>(\$697,617)</u>