



Olga Dazzo, Director
Michigan Department of Community Health
Capitol View Building - 7th Floor
201 Townsend
Lansing, MI 48913

June 26, 2011

Dear Director Dazzo,

I write to you on behalf of the Progressive Women's Alliance of West Michigan. In this time of great economic strain for Michigan families and taxpayers, we urge you to **fund pregnancy prevention programs at their current (FY 2010–2011) level.**

We understand that the final state budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 cuts the Healthy Michigan Fund from \$10 million over multiple programs to \$5 million in one line item. We also understand that the Healthy Michigan Fund was allotted an additional “one-time-only” \$3 million line item. Finally, we understand that the final budget grants the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) complete discretion in allocating this combined \$8 million. In exercising this discretion, we ask the MDCH to fund pregnancy prevention programs at their **current (FY 2010–2011) level.**

The predominant reason we urge this allocation is economic. Pregnancy prevention saves Michigan taxpayers money. In 2006, approximately 1.6 million births resulted from unintended pregnancies.¹ It is well-documented that unintended pregnancies cost taxpayers far more than pregnancy prevention services. The majority of unintended pregnancies occur among the uninsured — those who can least afford it. As a result, they are funded by public funds. American taxpayers pay roughly \$11.1 billion annually for unintended pregnancies overall.² In 2006, 62% of unintended pregnancies in Michigan were publicly funded by, among other things, Medicaid disbursements and public

¹ Sonfield, Kost, Benson, Gold, and Finer, *The Public Costs of Births Resulting from Unintended Pregnancies: National and State-Level Estimates*. June 2011, the Guttmacher Institute at p 97. <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/psrh/full/4309411.pdf>

² *Id.* at p 98.

assistance payments.³ In 2006, each publicly-funded birth cost \$14,647.⁴ The latest research by your very Department shows that for every dollar spent on family planning in Michigan, over \$6 is saved in Medicaid costs the very next year. In view of these figures, diverting pregnancy prevention expenditures like birth control will not reduce our State's deficit, but will increase it.

The second reason we urge this allocation is because it will reduce the number of abortions in our State. Unintended pregnancies are the cause of most abortions in this country. While compassionate, intelligent, and well-meaning Michiganders disagree about abortion generally, we all agree on the goal of reducing the number of abortions in our State.

Governor Snyder recently named unintended and teen pregnancy prevention a priority in our State. The Progressive Women's Alliance applauds the Governor for recognizing pregnancy prevention as integral to the economic and overall health of our State. The MDCH can play a major role in fulfilling the Governor's goal by funding pregnancy prevention programs at their **current level**. Our State cannot divert these funds elsewhere and simply hope that those at risk of unintended pregnancies will somehow get the resources they need somewhere else. They will not, and it will cost our State more in the long run, both figuratively and literally.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and on behalf of our 600+ PWA members in West Michigan, I urge you to fund pregnancy prevention programs at their current (FY 2010–2011) level.

Very truly yours,



Melissa Moore Janes
Chair, Progressive Women's Alliance of West Michigan

cc Brenda Fink, Director
Family and Community Health Division
Michigan Department of Community Health

³ *Id.* at pp 96–98.

⁴ *Id.* at p 98.