

## Title X 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter Article

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### **Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation Marks 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Title X Family Planning Funding**

Forty years ago President Nixon signed into law the first federal funding source for family planning services, Title X of the Public Health Service Act. In doing so, Nixon established a lifeline for low-income women and men to receive comprehensive family planning services – education, contraception, counseling and health services. However, despite a significant need and proven effectiveness, Title X funding has not kept pace with the ever-growing need for services.

Now a core component of the U.S. health care system, Title X also is an important source of primary care for millions of Americans. In its first two decades alone, services provided at Title X-funded centers prevented 20 million unintended pregnancies and nine million abortions, and helped to prevent 5.5 million adolescent pregnancies, according to the Guttmacher Institute.

In Northeast Iowa, NEICAC Health Services serves women and men most in need: 99% of the clients provided Family Planning services have incomes less than 250% of the federal poverty level. Additionally, the majority of our clients are uninsured and cannot afford the same services from the private sector. Thanks to Title X funding, we provide high-quality family planning services either free of charge or on a reduced fee scale. The Title X funding allows these individuals to obtain education, physical examinations, cancer screening (Pap smears, breast exams, and testicular exams), and birth control methods to provide individuals the information and means to exercise personal choice in determining the number and spacing of their children.

The Title X funding also allows us to deliver educational outreach sessions to area high schools, alternative high schools, and local colleges. During these presentations we provide educational information focused on reproductive health issues; risk reduction behaviors related to sexually transmitted diseases, healthy relationships, birth control methods, and avoidance of sexual coercion.

“Family planning is an investment worth making – it improves public health and saves limited tax dollars,” says Lori Egan, NEICAC Health Programs Director. “Our community and others across the country depend on Title X funding.”

A 2009 Institute of Medicine report found that funding for Title X has not kept up with inflation in areas such as: increased costs of contraceptives, supplies, and diagnostic tests; greater numbers of people seeking services; increased costs of salaries and benefits; growing infrastructure expenses; or rising insurance costs. In Northeast Iowa, we currently only receive 15% of the necessary funding to provide services to the clients that qualify for the Family Planning Program from the Federal Title X Program.

“Support for Title X funding means supporting the practical tools of contraception, preventive screening, and family planning counseling,” says Mary Ann Humpal, Executive Director at

Northeast Iowa Community Action. “Moreover, these services create a nurturing environment for women and a stronger, more prosperous and productive society.”

Today, as we celebrate 40 years of Title X, we need your help! Join us in creating a better quality of life for all. Let your voice be heard, contact your legislator, and ask them to support the Family Planning Resolution.