

The 21st Century Women's Health Act

***Endorsers:** Planned Parenthood, National Partnership for Women and Families, National Women's Law Center*

The 21st Century Women's Health Act will help break down outdated barriers to a woman's reproductive freedom and ensure that deeply personal health care choices are put back where they belong—with women and their doctors. In doing so, the Act will help expand opportunity for women across the country.

The 21st Century Women's Health Act will:

Expand comprehensive preventive health services, including full access to contraceptive coverage for all women served by Medicaid

All private health insurance plans are now required to cover all U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved forms of contraception and all family services like breast pumps and breast feeding counseling. To ensure coverage equity across programs, this legislation will extend this requirement to women, men, and families who are served by Medicaid.

Establish a women's health nurse practitioner training program to expand access to primary care.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans see a nurse practitioner (NP) for their primary care health needs. To expand access to primary care providers, the 21st Century Women's Health Act provides three year training grants for Title X clinic NPs who specialize in women's health care.

Improve maternal safety and quality of care.

The 21st Century Women's Health Act gives states the power to start or enhance existing Maternal Mortality Review (MMR) Committees, which examine pregnancy-related and pregnancy-associated deaths to identify ways to prevent future fatalities. Only about half of all states have active committees today, creating a significant knowledge gap. Incentivizing the creation and improvement of MMR Committees will improve data collection and help eliminate disparities in maternal health outcomes.

Create a new ombudsperson role to support women's access to health services.

Some insurance companies and employers with personal objections continue to deny women coverage for FDA approved contraceptive methods, and because of misinformation from insurance companies and pharmacies, many women struggle to access critical health benefits. As a result, one in 20 women has been denied access to care by a health care provider because of a religious, moral, or personal objection. The 21st Century Women's Health Act will create a Women's Health Ombudsperson who can advocate for women and enforce their right to access the best health care services for their needs.

Provide compassionate assistance and awareness for survivors of rape.

Emergency contraception remains an underused prevention method in the United States, especially for survivors of sexual assault. If used correctly, emergency contraception in conjunction with prompt medical treatment could help many of these rape survivors avoid the additional trauma of facing an unintended pregnancy.

The 21st Century Women's Health Act will ensure that all hospitals and clinics provide survivors of sexual assault with free emergency contraception, no matter where the survivors live or who owns the hospital. In addition, the Act provides for partnerships with community-based organizations to prevent sexual violence.

Help women report instances of inappropriate charges for birth control and other critical health care needs.

The 21st Century Women's Health Act will create a reporting database for women to inform the Department of Health and Human Services of inappropriate charges. This will help ensure that women are not wrongly forced to pay more for health care services now covered under the Affordable Care.

Examine reproductive health access across the country.

Some women in the U.S. must travel 50 miles or more for access to constitutionally protected reproductive health services like abortion. Most counties lack abortion clinics and hundreds of laws have been passed at the state and federal level to restrict the right of women to access reproductive health services and family planning services. This Act will study how the harmful restrictions across the country affect the overall health and morbidity of women.

Launch a public awareness campaign for women's preventive services.

The Affordable Care Act made preventive services, like mammograms, immunizations and contraception coverage, breast-feeding counseling, domestic violence screening, and others available at no cost to women and their families. To fully inform women about their rights and health care options, the Act will launch a public awareness campaign among community-based organizations, pharmacists, providers, and other stakeholders.