



PRESS RELEASE

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Family Planning Saves Taxpayer Funds

DES MOINES, Iowa – February 2, 2010 – Each taxpayer dollar invested in programs and clinics that help women prevent unintended pregnancies saves taxpayers an average of almost \$4 in the first year of an avoided pregnancy and more than \$15 over five years, according to a just-completed benefit-cost analysis conducted for the Iowa Initiative to Reduce Unintended Pregnancies.

“Approximately one-half of the 52,000 women who will become pregnant in Iowa this year will become pregnant unintentionally,” says Christie Vilsack, executive director of the Iowa Initiative. “Helping low-income or uninsured women to avoid unintended pregnancy can save taxpayers thousands of dollars in healthcare costs, food assistance, and child care assistance for women, infants and children.”

The study, the first since 1992 to examine the costs versus benefits of family planning services in Iowa, found that every \$1 spent for family planning averts \$3.78 cents in public expenditures for health care, child care, and welfare over a one-year period. Over five years, those savings grow to \$15.12 for every family planning dollar spent. Services to 14- to-19-year-olds can save more than \$17 over five years for every family planning dollar.

The benefit-cost analysis was conducted by Dr. Belinda Udeh of the Public Policy Center at the University of Iowa, Dr. Mary Losch of the Center for Social and Behavioral Research at the University of Northern Iowa and Erica Spies of the Public Policy Center at the University of Iowa; the [study is available online at the University of Iowa's Public Policy Center](#).

“The economic impact is even greater when you consider that many women attain higher levels of education and better paying jobs when they are able to plan their pregnancies,” Vilsack adds.

Vilsack notes that more than 170,000 Iowa women and teenage girls qualify for publicly funded contraceptive services. However, only 41 percent of them are served by family planning clinics. The Guttmacher Institute estimates the 72 clinics operating in 49 Iowa counties help women avoid as many as 16,000 unintended pregnancies annually. Yet the state ranks 48th nationally in the availability of family planning services.

Eligible patients at the clinics can obtain routine gynecological examinations, conventional birth control products as well as long-acting, reversible contraceptives (LARC) that are up to 99 percent effective and can prevent pregnancies for three- to 10 years.

“The clinics are doing a remarkable job. Not only are they helping families in Iowa avoid unintended pregnancies, but they’re also delivering a substantial payback to taxpayers,” adds Vilsack.

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About the Iowa Initiative

The Iowa Initiative aims to reduce the high rate of unintended pregnancies among Iowa women ages 18-30 through networking, research and public outreach. The Iowa Initiative is part of a network of women's health organizations around the state working together to increase access to birth control options and family planning information. For more information, please contact Deb Madison-Levi at 515-282-5375/o or 515-371-5841/c.