
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Memorandum of January 22, 1993

The President

The Title X "Gag Rule"

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Title X of the Public Health Services Act provides Federal funding for family planning clinics to provide services for low-income patients. The Act specifies that Title X funds may not be used for the performance of abortions, but places no restrictions on the ability of clinics that receive Title X funds to provide abortion counseling and referrals or to perform abortions using non-Title X funds. During the first 18 years of the program, medical professionals at Title X clinics provided complete, uncensored information, including nondirective abortion counseling. In February 1988, the Department of Health and Human Services adopted regulations, which have become known as the "Gag Rule," prohibiting Title X recipients from providing their patients with information, counseling, or referrals concerning abortion. Subsequent attempts by the Bush Administration to modify the Gag Rule and ensuing litigation have created confusion and uncertainty about the current legal status of the regulations.

The Gag Rule endangers women's lives and health by preventing them from receiving complete and accurate medical information and interferes with the doctor-patient relationship by prohibiting information that medical professionals are otherwise ethically and legally required to provide to their patients. Furthermore, the Gag Rule contravenes the clear intent of a majority of the members of both the United States Senate and House of Representatives, which twice passed legislation to block the Gag Rule's enforcement but failed to override Presidential vetoes.

For these reasons, you have informed me that you will suspend the Gag Rule pending the promulgation of new regulations in accordance with the "notice and comment" procedures of the Administrative Procedure Act. I hereby direct you to take that action as soon as possible. I further direct that, within 30 days, you publish in the Federal Register new proposed regulations for public comment.

You are hereby authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.



THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, January 22, 1993.

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Editorial note: The Secretary of Health and Human Services is publishing documents relating to this memorandum in Part V of this issue. For the President's remarks on signing this memorandum, see p. 85 of the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*.