



March 12, 2019

The Honorable Alex Azar
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave NW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar,

On behalf of the nation's more than four million nurses, the American Academy of Nursing (Academy) and American Nurses Association (ANA) respectfully request that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reconsider its final rule on Title X Family Planning Programs (Title X).

The rule, which prohibits providers within the Title X program from referring their patients for safe and legal abortion services, violates the fundamental principle of ethical and evidence-based health care. This rule will significantly and detrimentally alter Title X, the only federal program exclusively dedicated to providing low-income patients with access to family planning and preventive health services and information. Placing a "gag" on those providing this care threatens the patient-provider relationship, which is centered on honesty and transparency, and prevents patients from having access and information on all their care options.

The Academy and ANA have a unique duty in protecting the nursing profession's ethical and moral responsibilities to maintain patients' trust. This trust is predicated upon giving patients complete and accurate information about their health care options so they may make meaningful, informed decisions about their health. Title X law has been clear in stating providers cannot withhold information from patients about their pregnancy options but this rule will force providers to do so.

Reconsideration of this final rule must be made to ensure patients' access to safe, legal care is upheld.

Sincerely,

Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FACHE, FAAN
President
American Academy of Nursing

Ernest Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN
President
American Nurses Association