

PIH Opposes Reinstatement of Mexico City Policy

"We believe that access to reproductive health is a human rights issue."

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BOSTON (February 3, 2017)—Partners In Health, a nongovernment health care provider working in 10 countries, strongly opposes President Trump’s memorandum of January 23, 2017, reinstating the Mexico City Policy or so-called “global gag rule.” The policy requires foreign nongovernmental organizations that are recipients of U.S. government dollars to certify that they will not “perform or actively promote abortion as a method of family planning” using funds from any source, including non-U.S. funds.

Abortion is illegal in most of the countries where PIH works. Yet in every country, some women do seek abortion or need an abortion for medical reasons. We believe that access to reproductive health is a human rights issue and includes access to contraception, safe abortion, and post-abortion care.

Because certification is a precondition to receiving any U.S. government global health assistance, the policy evokes fear among health organizations that do not want to test the limits of the law and risk their funding. Thus they provide fewer reproductive services.

This can drive women underground for abortion services that are dangerous and sometimes fatal. Objective [research](#), conducted during earlier years of the policy, shows that pretending abortion doesn’t exist ends up increasing, not decreasing, the number of abortions.

And it can force women to carry unwanted pregnancies and suffer physically and emotionally. This is particularly true of adolescents and



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young women who have less access to contraceptive services and in whom pregnancy carries a much higher risk of death. In Liberia, for example, risks associated with childbirth kill 1 in 28 women—a disproportionate number of whom are 15 to 19 years old.

Because at Partners In Health we stand for science and evidence, for health care as a human right, and for healthy women in poor countries, we oppose the re-institution of the Mexico City Policy.

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Partners In Health is an international medical organization that helps build and sustain public health systems in poor and underserved communities around the world. Launched in Haiti in 1987, Partners In Health today reaches 7 million people around the world and employs 18,000 people, including 15,000 local community health workers. Learn more about our work at www.pih.org. Support our efforts at <https://donate.pih.org/give-today>.

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