

The Gag Rule: The Facts

The “Gag Rule” prohibits organizations that receive family planning special projects (FPSP) grant funds from counseling women on their full range of reproductive health options.

Planned Parenthood opposes the Gag Rule because it is not supported by the medical community, it does not reflect Minnesota’s values, and it is blatantly unconstitutional.

The Gag Rule is an audacious attempt to restrict the speech of medical professionals and prevent women and families from accessing complete, honest, and accurate information from their health care providers. This ban has been ruled unconstitutional by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 8th Circuit.

- Over the past three decades, there have been many variations at a gag rule on publicly funded family planning programs – at the federal and state level as well as internationally. These attempts to restrict the speech of medical professionals have been vehemently opposed by the medical community, including the American Medical Association and the Minnesota Medical Association.
- Minnesota-specific attempts to impose a gag rule on FPSP include:
 - An original gag rule stipulation when FPSP was first enacted into law in 1978 – **which was declared unconstitutional** in 1979 under *Planned Parenthood of Minnesota v. the State of Minnesota*.
 - While the MCCL introduces this gag rule each and every year, **the Minnesota Legislature has consistently refused to pass this legislation**. Indeed, a number of pro-life senators assisted Planned Parenthood in its defeat of the last serious attempt to impose a gag rule on family planning funds.
 - This latest gag rule amendment is a new twist – **it attempts to amend a state law that was overturned in federal court**. This tactic **must** be interpreted as a blatant attempt to pass a bill that would necessitate **yet another challenge** in the federal courts.
- This gag rule would create an unethical environment for the state’s entire family planning system. Planned Parenthood is **not** the primary recipient of state FPSP funds – in fact, 4 out of every 5 family planning dollars go to providers **other than** Planned Parenthood. This gag rule will undermine the doctor/patient relationship for providers who work with local public health departments, tribal governments, and numerous nonprofit organizations.
- Family planning grant funds are **not** used to provide abortion services or direct referrals for abortion services and have **never** been used in this way.