

Glenda Wiles

From: Claire Zebrowski [zebrowsc@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2013 2:36 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners
Subject: Title X Program in Hamilton

Commissioners,

As a member of the Hamilton community I feel the urgent need to express my disappointment in the vote against the Title X program funding. The County Health building has provided medical information and attention to young women who wouldn't have otherwise had the chance! The community benefits from its presence here in the valley too greatly to cut it off at the knees.

There's more to the center than birth control. This center has provided testing and medication for sexually transmitted diseases for those who can't afford health insurance or the high costs of other clinics. On a trip to County Health, I was informed that they diagnose approximately five cases of chlamydia a week, sometimes a day. Personally, I have witnessed the fear of a youth who didn't know what was happening to them, and the panic they felt. If it weren't for County Health, I wouldn't have been diagnosed and therefore risked sterility. Thankfully, there was someplace I could go anonymously and be treated with respect. In addition to STD screening, County health also provides vaccinations for those who qualify (which feels like most of Hamilton living in the "low income" bracket). Meningitis, HPV or flu shots are expensive through most healthcare providers, if it is even carried. Allowing access to affordable medical attention should be at the top of the community's priorities.

The argument that the access to contraception allows teens to "go behind their parents' backs" and continue sexually activity does have a scary ring to it. However, is it the local government's place to dictate what happens in the home? Teens are likely to continue exploring their sexual urges even if this is an approachable subject in the home or not. In a perfect world, there would be no need for secrets in the home. We don't live in a perfect world. There will always be secrets between families; its human. Information as well as contraception will be denied to either the teen who is curious about their bodies, or those who can't afford contraception.

The increased amount of unplanned pregnancies will not be the only side effect. The amount of people that go undiagnosed with STD's or other medical defects that could have been found through pap-smears or simple screening will also increase. This is not what we want our community to be like. We want equality for all and our tax dollars to be accessible for those who need it.

Thank you for your time,

Claire Zebrowski
concerned citizen