



The Council for Health and  
Human Service Ministries

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
#BeAVoiceCHHSM

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## BE A VOICE ISSUE SUMMARY: REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE

*All Be A Voice Health and Human Service Advocacy Toolkit sections are on the advocacy page listed on the bottom of this summary.*

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### BACKGROUND:

- According to the United Nations, reproductive health is considered to be a human right and fundamental to a person's self-determination and autonomy. According to the World Health Organization, the United States is one of only 13 countries worldwide with a rising maternal mortality ratio, and is the only economically developed country on that list. Moreover, Black women are 3-to-4 times more likely than white women to die from pregnancy-related causes, many of which are preventable with access to affordable and culturally-competent care.
- For the past 40 years, the Hyde Amendment has prohibited abortion services to be covered for those under Medicaid (except in cases of rape, incest, or life endangerment), in federal prisons and detention centers, in the military, enrolled in CHIP, and for Native Americans. Low-income women and women of color disproportionately face barriers to receiving abortion care.
- Publicly-funded health centers are essential to providing contraception access, STD/I testing and treatment, etc. for many people, particularly for low-income and adolescent women. The need for publicly subsidized services exceeds the level of support provided, and many states have attempted to shut down or defund certain providers, like Planned Parenthood, even in areas with limited health care options or infrastructure.

### CURRENTLY:

- Millions of Americans remain uninsured or underinsured, so advocating for reproductive health must start with comprehensive health care for all. Reductions in state and local public health budgets has hampered health departments' ability to address maternal health. Increased state funding to such programs as Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grants are essential in reducing maternal and infant mortality.
- Because reproductive health does not start, or end, with pregnancy, comprehensive, evidenced-based sexuality education for youth is needed. The socio-economic conditions that impact reproductive health and choices must be addressed with policies that support stable thriving communities.

### QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

- Many health care clinics are closing due to restrictive state measures on access to abortion. But these clinics also provide cancer screenings and prenatal care. How would you ensure that women can receive the full range of health care, including reproductive health care?
- Women of color face far greater obstacles to the full range of reproductive health care. One consequence is a higher rate of maternal deaths. How would you address this?
- What is your position on the Hyde Amendment?
- What steps would you take to empower women to access the full range of health care and protect their autonomy to make decisions for their health and the health of their families?