Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

Overview

In 2017, an estimated 18.2 million women were living with HIV and AIDS worldwide\(^1\) and more than 214 million women in the developing world who wanted to use modern contraception were not doing so.\(^2\) Modern methods of contraception include intrauterine devices, internal and external condoms, implants, injectables, oral contraceptives, patches, spermicides, emergency contraceptive pills, vaginal rings, tubal ligation, and vasectomy.

People seeking HIV services and those seeking family planning have needs that intersect, including protecting themselves against unintended pregnancy and HIV. Evidence shows that integrating family planning and HIV programs along with other sexual and reproductive health services improves health outcomes.\(^3,4,5\)

Integrated sexual and reproductive health services includes: contraception, including emergency contraception; fertility planning; HIV prevention, treatment, and care; gender-based violence screening and care; HIV pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis; and safe abortion and post-abortion services. As a part of an integrated prevention strategy, it is critical that people have access to relevant, appropriate, and correct information in one place to help them make informed decisions about their health.


Recommendations to Members of Congress

Policymakers should support integrated sexual and reproductive health services. Sexual and reproductive health services must be integrated, comprehensive, accessible, and offered free of any form of discrimination. A lack of integrated services results in critical health care gaps that limit the effectiveness of U.S. foreign assistance and negatively impact people’s health.

Members of Congress should advocate for full funding for the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health; International Family Planning; and gender-based violence prevention. In addition, they should support the humanitarian accounts and adequate multilateral funding for the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and Global Fund. They should also restore funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).
Benefits of Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Services

*Increases awareness on how to prevent HIV infections.*
Integrating HIV and sexual and reproductive health programs, such as family planning and maternal health, improves access to these health services\(^6\) and extends programs to people residing in remote areas with a lack of health services.\(^7\)

*Promotes human rights.*
People have the right to access information and resources to decide when and whether to have children and how many children to have. Access to comprehensive and voluntary family planning services ensures that people have control of their family size and can prevent the spread of HIV.\(^8\),\(^9\) Everyone should be empowered to make informed choices for themselves, and have access to a wide range of contraceptive and HIV prevention methods.

*Improves access to quality health programs.*
Integrated and prevention-based sexual and reproductive health programs give people the information and services they need to protect themselves and their partners from unintended pregnancies, HIV, and other sexually transmitted infections.\(^10\)

*Offers critical protection methods.*
Correct and consistent use of internal and external condoms reduces the risk of unintended pregnancy and acquiring HIV.\(^11\),\(^12\) These methods can also be used with hormonal and non-hormonal methods of contraception to provide additional protection against unintended pregnancies and HIV.\(^13\)

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\(^7\) Supra note 4.


