



March 31, 2023

Tisha Reed, Title X Project Officer  
Department of Health and Human Services  
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Reference: OPA decision not to fund continuation award for FPHPA006553

Award #: FPHPA006553-01-00  
Budget Period: 04/01/2022 – 03/31/2023  
Project Period: 04/01/2022 – 03/31/2027

Dear Deputy Assistant Secretary Marcella, Dr. Moore and, Ms. Reed,

As you know, the Tennessee Department of Health has been a recipient of Title X family planning grant funding for more than 50 years. We were therefore surprised to receive your letter of March 20, 2023, giving ten days' notice that you would be ending our longstanding partnership. We are writing to seek clarification of the basis for OPA's recommendation.

From your letter, we understood that the Office of Population Affairs is recommending that the Department's Title X grant be terminated because of the Department's refusal to advise pregnant women on how to get abortions that are illegal in this state. But your letter also notes that Tennessee lacks policies on infant care, foster care, and adoption. It is unclear whether these issues also formed the basis for OPA's termination recommendation. It is also unclear why OPA issued this finding, considering that OPA, in its "Title X Program Review Report" dated October 10, 2022, found that the Department's counseling on these very topics met OPA expectations. Indeed, the Department met all OPA expectations listed in the 63-page report, except for one: the Department did not see enough male clients in its family planning clinics.

OPA's findings were based on its assessment, through a virtual program review conducted July 11-15, 2022, of the counseling the Department provides to pregnant women. OPA began its October 2022 Program Review Report by noting that "[t]he Tennessee Department of Health is the only agency with the capacity, staff, and expertise to administer Title X funds with integrity and without a gap in services in the state of Tennessee." The Department's counseling on infant care, foster care, and adoption has not changed since they were last reviewed by OPA. The only thing that has changed is Tennessee law on abortion.

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Given that the Department's counseling on infant care, foster care and adoption have not changed since OPA previously reviewed and approved them, will OPA continue to recommend contract termination solely because of the Department's refusal to counsel pregnant women on abortions that are now illegal in Tennessee?

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Yoshie Darnall in blue ink.

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Yoshie Darnall, MSN, APN, ANP-BC, WHNP-BC  
Family Planning Program Director  
Division of Family Health and Wellness  
Reproductive and Women's Health

Handwritten signature of Leslie A. Meehan in black ink.

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Leslie Meehan, MPA AICP  
Deputy Commissioner, Population Health