

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



March 24, 2022

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

***RE: Please veto funding for abortifacients through contracts with family planning providers included in budget line item 509***

Dear Governor DeSantis:

The budget recently passed by the Florida legislature includes a new \$2 million recurring appropriation for the Department of Health to contract with family planning providers to promote and provide Hormonal Long-acting Reversible Contraception (HLARC). We greatly appreciated your veto of the same proposal last year and hope that you will choose to do so again. Please consider the following reasons:

***Funding abortifacients is detrimental to the pro-life cause***

We share your goal of protecting unborn children in our state. We recognize that life begins at fertilization and, therefore, have concerns about abortifacients in addition to our concerns with surgical and chemical abortions.

HLARCs have an abortifacient effect as they impede implantation of an embryo in the uterus. Three examples of HLARCs are hormonal intrauterine devices manufactured by Bayer: Mirena, Kyleena, and Skyla. The prescribing information documents for all three acknowledge in section 12.2 that women continue to ovulate while using these products; therefore, conception still occurs.<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Section 12.1 of the prescribing documents states that studies suggest one of the HLARC mechanisms to prevent pregnancy is alteration of the endometrium—the inner lining of the uterus. That is to say, it creates an inhospitable womb for the implantation and growth of the newly-conceived human being. In many cases, HLARCs seem to cause intentional, unnatural inhibition of implantation, thereby ending nascent human life.

***Impact of contraception use on abortion rates is not promising***

Finally, studies show that increasing access to contraception in a given population fails to reduce unintended pregnancies or decrease abortion rates. Specifically regarding HLARC, it has not been shown whether such use reduces chemical and surgical abortions. Reported failure rates for HLARCs are lower than for other contraceptive methods but they are not non-existent. Some data posits that hormonal contraception may increase later term abortions by delaying identification of pregnancy, since the women did not expect to become pregnant and hormonal contraception can mask some of the signs of pregnancy.

***HLARCs have negative side effects for women***

HLARCs operate by introducing synthetic hormones into a woman's body to mimic pregnancy. These can, and do, often disrupt a woman's menstrual cycle and cause irregular uterine bleeding. Other side effects and risks for women range from irritating (pelvic and abdominal pain, cramping, headaches, nausea, mood swings, depression, weight gain, and breast pain) to more severe (increased risk of developing ovarian cysts or experiencing a uterine perforation or pelvic

inflammatory disease). Further, women who conceive while using HLARC have a heightened risk of having potentially life-threatening ectopic pregnancies.

***Contraceptives are already widespread***

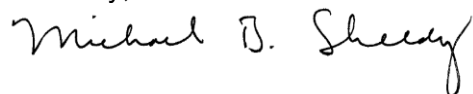
Contraception is already widely available for those who wish to utilize it. Further, contraception is already publicly funded in Florida. Women who qualify for Medicaid already receive various methods of contraceptives through the Florida family planning waiver program. Additionally, the Department of Health (DOH) already receives an annual appropriation for family planning services. Expanding public funding of family planning providers for HLARCs is wholly unnecessary.

***Contracts may support anti-family groups***

The proposed funding may inadvertently and indirectly support organizations that actively work to devalue life and the family unit. Some of the family planning providers that will likely pursue contracts with the DOH to promote and provide HLARCs are engaged in providing abortions. It is harmful to Florida's citizens and taxpayers for the state to support organizations that commit themselves to the destruction of life instead of its flourishing.

For these varied reasons, we urge you to veto this portion of line item 509. We would be happy to discuss our concerns further at your request.

Sincerely,



Michael B. Sheedy

cc: Most Rev. Felipe J. Estévez, Bishop of St. Augustine and Respect Life Moderator  
Chris Spencer, Director of Policy and Budget  
Christie Arnold, Associate for Social Concerns and Respect Life

<sup>1</sup> Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals Inc. (2020). *Mirena: Highlights of prescribing information*. Retrieved from [http://labeling.bayerhealthcare.com/html/products/pi/Mirena\\_PI.pdf](http://labeling.bayerhealthcare.com/html/products/pi/Mirena_PI.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals Inc. (2018). *Skyla: Highlights of prescribing information*. Retrieved from [http://labeling.bayerhealthcare.com/html/products/pi/Skyla\\_PI.pdf](http://labeling.bayerhealthcare.com/html/products/pi/Skyla_PI.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Bayer HealthCare Pharmaceuticals Inc. (2016). *Kyleena: Highlights of prescribing information*. Retrieved from [http://labeling.bayerhealthcare.com/html/products/pi/Kyleena\\_PI.pdf](http://labeling.bayerhealthcare.com/html/products/pi/Kyleena_PI.pdf)