



Illinois

June 15, 2018

Dear Members of Chicago City Council:

We write to urge you to reject the request by Presence Health for a \$5.5 million tax-increment financing (TIF) subsidy. At a time when reproductive health care is under attack, the City of Chicago should work to expand access to the full range of women's health care, not use tax payer dollars to support an institution that imposes its religious beliefs to deny patients basic health care.

Presence Health follows the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services (ERDs), and, as a result, denies patients an array of reproductive health care, including contraceptive pregnancy prevention care, tubal ligations, and miscarriage treatment. Presence Health is already the largest health system in Illinois, and as it continues to grow and merge with other Catholic health systems, religious restrictions define and limit the care many residents of Chicago and other Illinois communities receive.

Women and families suffer when essential health care is denied. As a report issued by the ACLU demonstrates, patients are denied medically indicated care at Catholic institutions when religion takes precedence over medical standards of care. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/reproductive-freedom/religion-and-reproductive-rights/health-care-denied?redirect=healthcaredenied>. Indeed, one patient included in this report was a Presence Health patient who was denied a tubal ligation at the time of a C-section, when it is safest, and then, after being denied her tubal ligation, was told that she could not get contraception unless she was willing to lie about the reason. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-iVvBNF-t8>.

Presence Health's policy of turning away patients seeking basic health care is inconsistent with our city's values – of assuring that all in our society have access to quality health care – and should NOT be supported by 5.5 million tax payer dollars. We urge you to reject this funding request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorie Chaiten".

Lorie Chaiten, Director
Women's and Reproductive
Rights Project