



# BCHD PRESS ADVISORY

Baltimore City Health Department  
1001 E. Fayette Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor – Oxiris Barbot, M.D., Commissioner of Health*

Media Contact: *Brian Schleiter*  
443-984-2623  
[mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:mediahealth@baltimorecity.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **“Women Need to Know!” Family Planning Awareness Campaign**

### ***Free Family Planning Services Available for Low-Income Women Jan. 1st***

**BALTIMORE, MD (November 14, 2011)** – On November 21st, Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, DHMH Secretary Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Senator Catherine Pugh, and Delegate Heather Mizeur will host a press event to highlight a new bipartisan state law that will provide free family planning services for low-income women in Maryland.

Women can sign up immediately, and free family planning services – including breast and reproductive cancer screenings, pelvic exams, sexually transmitted disease testing, pregnancy counseling, and contraception – will be available beginning on January 1st.

The Family Planning Works Act enacted in the 2011 session now allows all women in Maryland up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level – about \$22,000 per year for a single woman – to receive free family planning services. Nearly 35,000 low-income women will be eligible for services.

Maryland ranks near the bottom nationally in its rates of infant mortality and other birth outcomes measures, and Baltimore City, Prince George’s County, and the Eastern Shore have the most critical women and infant health needs in the state. This expansion will improve birth outcomes by reversing infant mortality and low birth weight rates, improving the health of mothers and babies, and reducing the number of abortions. Additionally, the reduction in unintended pregnancies and births is expected to produce \$20 million to \$40 million in savings for the state.

Other Family Planning Awareness events will be held in Prince George’s County and the Eastern Shore.

**WHAT:** “Women Need to Know!” Family Planning Awareness Event

**WHEN:** Monday, November 21, 2011, 9:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Druid Health Center, 1515 W North Ave, Baltimore

(more)

WHO: Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Secretary Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Senator Catherine Pugh, sponsor of the new family planning law  
Delegate Heather Mizeur, sponsor of the new family planning law  
Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot, Baltimore City Health Department  
Family Planning Enrollees  
Others TBD

Participating Organizations – Planned Parenthood of Maryland, Maryland Women’s Coalition for Health Care Reform, Maryland Citizens’ Health Initiative, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland, ACLU of Maryland, and more...

###