

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- California's Family PACT Program provides a framework to detail client rights and provider responsibilities, with the aim of promoting informed decision-making and actions for optimal family planning and reproductive health.
- The seven standards of care include: informed consent; confidentiality; linguistic and cultural competence; access to care; availability of covered services; clinical and preventive services; and education and counseling.
- An essential component of Family PACT care requires providers to offer reproductive health education and counseling to their clients.
- Family PACT promotes clients' full freedom of choice to meet their family planning and reproductive health needs.



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# Fact Sheet On Client Rights & Provider Responsibilities

## Background

Client rights and provider responsibilities are central to quality family planning and reproductive health care. Client rights may include, but are not limited to, access, choice, confidentiality and dignity.<sup>1</sup> Clients who fully participate in medical encounters benefit when they take responsibility for making decisions, actively communicate with providers, and insist on good care.<sup>2</sup> To respect clients' rights, providers have certain responsibilities, such as maintaining clinical competency and providing adequate education and counseling to allow clients to make informed choices. To be effective, providers must understand and respect clients' perspectives and expectations, while communicating in a manner easily understood by the client.<sup>3</sup> California's Family PACT Program has developed seven Program Standards that uphold client rights and provider responsibilities, promote informed decision-making, and facilitate optimal family planning and reproductive health.

## Family PACT Program

California's Family PACT Program provides clinical services for family planning and reproductive health at no cost to eligible uninsured residents, filling a critical gap in health care for the indigent, low-income, and working poor. Women and men are eligible if they reside in California regardless of immigration status, are at risk of pregnancy or causing pregnancy, have a gross family income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level,<sup>3</sup> and have no other source of health care coverage for family planning services. The Family PACT Program is administered by the California Department of Public Health, Office of Family Planning.

## Standards of Care

The seven Family PACT Program Standards outline the responsibilities of participating providers towards providing clients the highest quality of care<sup>5</sup> and are incorporated into the initial provider training for the Family PACT Program and reinforced in the Family PACT Policies, Procedures and Billing Instructions Manual. These seven standards detail the scope, type, and quality of care required for the provision of comprehensive reproductive health and family planning services.<sup>6</sup> Program Standards include a statement of Family Planning Patient Rights. Participation of any individual in the Family PACT Program is voluntary and free of compulsion or coercion of any kind. Adherence to these standards is a requirement for all enrolled Family PACT providers and are summarized below.

## 1. Informed Consent

- Voluntary, without bias or coercion
- Presented in a language the client understands
- Client consent required regardless of age

## 2. Confidentiality

- Personal privacy and dignity respected
- Clients informed about confidentiality rights
- Personal information treated as privileged communication

## 3. Linguistic and Cultural Competence

- Culturally sensitive services in a language understood by the client
- Materials appropriate to client's language and literacy level

## 4. Access to Care

- All services provided directly or by referral at no cost to client
- Clients served without regard to gender, race, marital status, disability, or parity
- Clients to be seen within a reasonable time period or referred to another provider
- Referrals available for medical and psychosocial services beyond the scope of Family PACT

## 5. Availability of Covered Services

- All temporary and permanent contraceptive methods available
- Client participation in choice of contraceptive method
- Referral information for all options provided with pregnancy test results

## 6. Clinical and Preventive Services

- Comprehensive health history including review of risk factors
- Reproductive health exam including Pap smear, periodic follow-up exams
- Breast or testicular self-exam instructions
- Provision of all FDA approved contraceptive methods including emergency contraception and sterilization
- Pregnancy testing and comprehensive options counseling
- HIV screening
- STI testing and treatment

## 7. Education and Counseling Services

- Ongoing assessment of client's reproductive health education and counseling needs including decision making, risk reduction, sexual practices, partner relationship, and pregnancy plans
- Adequate verbal and written information to make informed choices
- Promotion of positive reproductive health behaviors
- Counseling staff with appropriate reproductive health knowledge and counseling skills functioning under supervision of enrolled Family PACT providers

## CONCLUSION

*The Family PACT Program strives to protect client rights and promote provider responsibilities. Through a variety of policies and procedures, including the establishment of its seven standards of care, the Family PACT Program facilitates clients' abilities to make informed choices and decisions, which are critical to comprehensive family planning and reproductive health care. The Family PACT Program continues to provide quality, comprehensive family planning and reproductive health care to women and men in need throughout California.*

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1 International Planned Parenthood Federation, Rights of the Client. IPPF Medical Bulletin Vol. 37, No.5, October 2003.

2 Ibid.

3 Maximizing Access and Quality. Improving Client-Provider Interaction. Population Reports Series Q, Number 1. Fall 2003.

4 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Federal Poverty Guidelines. For a family unit of one, 200% of the Federal Poverty Level is \$20,800, increasing by \$7,200 for each additional person. Accessed on September 19th 2008.