Why Women Are Rushing to Get IUDs

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In the wake of Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election, women in the United States moved quickly to secure intrauterine devices (IUDs) and other forms of long-acting birth control. According to recent Google Trends and social media data, American women are scared that the Republican administration could roll back funds for reproductive health and possibly end provisions under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that currently require insurers to cover contraceptives, NPR reports.

An IUD is a tiny device that's inserted into the uterus to help prevent pregnancy for up to 12 years. Some types of IUDs use the hormone progestin to help block sperm and prevent eggs from leaving the ovaries. Others use copper to ward off egg fertilization. Currently, five types of IUDs are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and covered under the ACA. All these devices are up to 99 percent effective at preventing pregnancy.

Social media showed that the moment Trump was elected, searches for topics such as "IUD" "birth control" and "Planned Parenthood" skyrocketed online. Reproductive health centers across the country also noted a massive influx of calls from women who hoped to book an IUD appointment or wanted to discuss their birth control options before the president-elect took office.

Health care experts suggested that Trump's administration and a majority Republican Congress could make access to birth control and reproductive health services more difficult in a number of ways. Politicians could repeal the ACA entirely or neutralize government health exchanges by refusing to reimburse insurers who take part in them. Lawmakers could also redefine contraceptives under the law, leaving certain forms of birth control out of the equation, or limit contraceptive coverage in employer-sponsored plans. In addition, Trump and his supporters in Congress could also cut federal funding to Planned Parenthood and other programs that provide reproductive health services to women nationwide. What's more, access to abortions would most likely decline dramatically.

Despite these possibilities, experts suggested that women might have more time than they think to decide about their birth control options. This is because access to contraceptives included in insurance plans already purchased for 2017 are likely to be honored. Additionally, it's unlikely that a reversal of ACA policies will occur before the end of next year.

In the meantime, click here to learn more about IUDs and other available contraceptive options. Then, click here to learn more about enrolling for health insurance under the ACA for coverage

through 2017.

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