



For Immediate Release
June 29, 2026

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Wisconsin's Young People Lose as Trump Administration Dismantles Teen Health Programs

The Trump administration's termination of \$68 million in evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention grants threatens years of public health progress in Wisconsin, leaving programs serving thousands of young people without federal support

MADISON, WI — On June 26, 2026, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services received notice that the federal government had terminated its Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) grant, effective immediately. The termination is part of a nationwide action by the Trump administration cutting 53 of 67 TPP grants, totaling approximately \$68 million, affecting programs in more than two dozen states. In Wisconsin, the notice went to more than a dozen organizations simultaneously, with no transition period, no wind-down funding, and no path to continue work already underway. Expenses incurred after June 26 are ineligible for federal reimbursement. Together, these organizations have spent years building evidence-based programs that have reached thousands of Wisconsin teens, and all of them are now navigating an immediate funding crisis.

Among those directly affected is the [Providers and Teens Communicating for Health \(PATCH\) Program](#), a 16-year-old Wisconsin initiative operated by Embolden WI that trains teens to improve how health care providers communicate with young patients. PATCH faces an immediate loss of \$130,000 in funding and is deeply concerned that additional federal funding streams supporting its Wisconsin work may face similar pressure in the months ahead.

"The teens we work with inspire me every single day. They come into this program with passion and big ideas, and they leave healthier, more confident, and more capable of advocating for themselves and their generation," shares Amy Olejniczak, Founder and Director, PATCH Program. "After 16 years of witnessing that transformation, I know without question that this work matters. Wisconsin youth are worth investing in. Our federal government just decided they aren't. I am both heartbroken and furious."

A Proven Public Health Success, Now Under Attack

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program was established by Congress in 2010 with bipartisan support, representing a landmark shift from ideology to evidence in federal adolescent health policy. Since its creation, TPP has funded a wide range of rigorously evaluated interventions, including youth development programs, health communication initiatives, and community-based models, all grounded in science and designed to meet the real needs of young people.

The results have been striking. Teen birth rates have fallen approximately 72 percent since 2007, a historic public health achievement—built program by program, community by community, through sustained federal investment in evidence-based adolescent health programming. The federal government's own evidence review identified dozens of programs proven effective at reducing teen pregnancy and improving adolescent sexual health outcomes.



Cutting this funding now does not just defund programs; it dismantles the infrastructure that made those outcomes possible.

What This Funding Makes Possible

PATCH is one of Wisconsin's most distinctive adolescent health programs: a youth workforce and leadership initiative in which teens are hired, trained, and paid to improve how health care providers communicate with young patients. Through workshops, consultations, and direct engagement with the health care system, PATCH has employed nearly 300 Wisconsin teens since 2010 and generated documented, statistically significant improvements across every area studied. A 2024 evaluation of 104 Wisconsin PATCH alumni found that advocacy scores rose from 2.75 to 4.79 on a five-point scale, with statistically significant gains in healthcare confidence, health and wellbeing behaviors, and understanding of public health systems. These are not anecdotal results. They are the product of 16 years of sustained, evidence-based investment in Wisconsin's young people.

“As a PATCH alum, I’m grateful for the knowledge I received and the lessons that helped me build healthy habits, make informed decisions, and enjoy my young adulthood focused on earning my nursing degree, traveling, and pursuing my goals instead of facing the challenges of an unintended teen pregnancy,” shares Silvia Maritnez Sequra who participated a PATCH Teen Educator in 2012. “Now, as a nurse, I know for a fact why programs like PATCH matter. Every teen deserves the opportunity to grow up, pursue an education, build a career, explore the world, and choose if and when they’re ready to become a parent. Investing in evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention is an investment in healthier futures for individuals, families, and our communities.”

Legal Precedent and the Road Ahead

This is not the first time the Trump administration has attempted to dismantle the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. In 2017, a similar wave of terminations was challenged in court by Democracy Forward on behalf of affected grantees and won. Four federal judges ruled five times that the administration had acted unlawfully, and the government dropped its appeals every time. Courts found the terminations violated HHS's own regulations and were arbitrary and capricious under the Administrative Procedure Act. History may repeat itself: the Wisconsin Department of Health Services has stated it is assessing all avenues possible to ensure the federal government is following all requirements in this funding agreement.

A Call to Action

Embolden WI is asking the community to help bridge the funding gap for PATCH while the organization works with state partners to identify a path forward. Individual donations of any size help sustain PATCH's Wisconsin programming for the teens who depend on it. Donate at patchprogram.org/donate.

About PATCH

The Providers and Teens Communicating for Health (PATCH) Program works in true partnership with teens to improve the health and well-being of their generation. PATCH ensures that young people are at the table, not just as participants, but as partners and leaders. PATCH is a program of Embolden WI. Learn more at patchprogram.org.