



THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC BIOETHICS CENTER

6399 Drexel Road, Philadelphia, PA 19151 ▪ Tel 215-877-2660 ▪ Fax 215-877-2688 ▪ www.ncbcenter.org

Bioethics Public Policy Report January 15, 2019

National

- *Planned Parenthood admits its core mission:* Planned Parenthood President Leanna Wen recently confirmed through a [tweet](#) that the organization's primary mission is abortion: "Our core mission is providing, protecting and expanding access to abortion and reproductive health care. We will never back down from that fight – it's a fundamental human right and women's lives are at stake."
- *Survey shows millennials pro-life:* A newly released [survey](#) from Students for Life suggests that millennials support life. The study of 18–34 year-olds shows that only 7 percent agree with the Democratic party platform that there should be no legal limits on abortion and that it should be paid for by taxpayer dollars. 42 percent of millennials say they oppose abortion "broadly" and 70 percent say they support abortion restrictions. When asked if federal tax dollars should go to federally qualified health centers or to Planned Parenthood, 48 percent said to the health centers while only 17 percent said Planned Parenthood. For more information on the survey, click [here](#).
- *Overall cancer rates declining (?):* The American Cancer Society [reports](#) that the overall cancer rate has declined 27 percent over the past twenty–five years. Reasons for the decline include fewer people smoking and advances in early detection. Unfortunately, obesity-related cancers are increasing, including cancers of the liver and pancreas. Cancer remains the number two killer in the country behind heart disease. 1.7 million new cancer cases will be reported in 2019 and there will be 600,000 deaths.
- *US fertility rates falling:* According to data [published](#) in the Centers for Disease Control's *National Vital Statistics Reports*, from 2016 to 2017 the total lifetime fertility rate in the United States continued to fall. In 2016, the rate was 1,820.5 per 1000 women, in 2017 it fell to 1,765.5 per 1,000. Lifetime fertility rate is defined as "the expected number of births that a group of 1,000 women would have in their lifetimes according to the current age-specific birth rates." A rate of 2100 births per 1000 women is needed to maintain population levels. South Dakota had the highest lifetime fertility rate at 2,227.5 births per 1,000 women, while Washington DC was the lowest at 1,421 per 1,000. The last time the US rate was above 2100 per 1000 women was in 1971.
- *Americans getting "bigger":* A new [report](#) from the National Center for Health Statistics demonstrates that the typical American is getting bigger. The average US male is 5 foot 9 inches tall and weighs 198 pounds. His waist size is 40 inches and body mass index (BMI) is 29 – "at the high end of the 'overweight' category." The average US female is 5 foot 4 inches tall and weighs 171 pounds. Her waist is 39 inches and has a BMI just under 30. The report noted that from 1960–2016, average weight for men increased by 32 pounds, for women it increased 31 pounds.

Federal Courts

- *Judges block second contraception rule:* Two federal judges appointed by President Obama have issued injunctions against a second Trump Administration rule offering religious liberty protections for employers opposed to being forced to provide contraception in their health care plans. On January 13th, U.S. District Judge Haywood Gilliam [blocked](#) the rule from taking effect in thirteen states plus the District of Columbia. On January 14th, Judge Wendy Beetlestone issued a nationwide injunction. To clarify, the judges' rulings do not permanently block the new rule, but prevent it from taking effect while legal challenges against it move forward. For more information, click [here](#).

State by State

- *Tele-abortions to continue in Kansas:* Federal District Judge Franklin This has ruled that a [Kansas](#) law barring tele-abortions has no legal force. The law was challenged by the Center for Reproductive Rights on behalf of Trust Women Wichita, which operates a clinic that began offering tele-abortions in October 2018 because its doctors lived out of state could only be at the facility two days a week. The challenge argued, in part, that banning tele-abortion places an undue burden on women seeking abortions, thus violating the state constitution. The Kansas health department reports that in 2017 (the latest year data is available), nearly 4,000 chemical abortions took place, or 58 percent of the state's total. It is not clear how many of these terminations were tele-abortions. Seventeen other states have banned tele-abortion.
- *NYC to provide health coverage for all?* [New York City](#) Mayor Bill de Blasio (D) has proposed a guarantee of affordable health care for every NYC resident, including those who are in the city illegally. The goal of the plan is to cover 600,000 New Yorkers who do not have coverage and it is estimated to cost \$100 million per year. Under the program, people will be able get an insurance card which gives them access to primary care and other services. Fees will depend on income. The premise of the program is that it is more cost-efficient to offer people access to primary care up front, rather than having them go to emergency rooms to treat serious health problems later on.

Of Note

- *Denver to legalize "magic mushrooms?"* Following-up on "successful" efforts to legalize marijuana in Colorado, activists in [Denver](#) are seeking to legalize psilocybin (psychedelic) mushrooms. The activists recently turned in ballot petitions with the intent of getting the measure into the May 2019 municipal elections.

Sharing the News: If you have public policy news that you would like to share with the NCBC, or if you have colleagues who would like to receive the Bioethics Public Policy Report, please contact Joe Zalot at 215-871-2014 or jzalot@ncbcenter.org.

Sharing the Resources: The web page of The National Catholic Bioethics Center, available at <http://www.ncbcenter.org/>, is a significant resource for bioethics information. NCBC bioethicists are also on-call for consultation twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week, at 215-877-2660.

Previous editions of the Bioethics Public Policy Report are available on the NCBC website at <https://www.ncbcenter.org/advocacy/public-policy-reports/>.