



# Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Panhandle Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Having Happy, Healthy Babies**

**Hayden, ID** - About 48% of all women aged 15-44 have had an unintended pregnancy, with 21% of births in marriage unintended, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

That's where Panhandle Health District comes in. With a team of nurses, nutritionists, health educators and other professionals, Panhandle Health District provides more than 40 different public health programs to people in North Idaho, including family planning services.

"Our goal is to have happy, healthy babies that are spaced and timed for the health of the mother and child," said Tina Ghirarduzzi, senior health education specialist for Panhandle Health District.

Family planning services provide confidential, low-cost preventative health care to both men and women to help with their reproductive health needs. PHD provides education, counseling, STD testing, birth control, pap smears, exams and more.

"We tailor each appointment based on that individual's need or desire," Ghirarduzzi said.

In addition to preconception counseling, PHD offers a broad range of contraceptive options, such as birth control pills, birth control shots, hormonal and non-hormonal IUDs (intrauterine devices) and condoms. Panhandle Health staff review all options with new patients, explain any side effects and risks and then help patients decide what method is best for them.

According to research by the Healthy People initiative, the potential negative outcomes of unplanned pregnancies include delays in initiating prenatal care, reduced likelihood of breastfeeding, including an increased risk of maternal depression and increased risk of physical violence during pregnancy. Children from unplanned pregnancies are more

likely to experience poor mental and physical health during childhood and have lower educational attainment and more behavioral issues in their teen years.

Family planning is one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, according to HealthyPeople.gov. In 2015, public health family planning services helped prevent 1.9 million unintended pregnancies through preconception counseling and providing birth control options. Family planning services allow individuals to achieve desired birth spacing and family size.

“Research shows that women who use birth control find it easier to reach educational goals, help financially support their family and keep a job,” Ghirarduzzi said. “Unintended pregnancy can affect anyone regardless of age, marital or socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity.”

Kristina Meyer, nurse manager with PHD, said that family planning gives women the power to control if and when they become pregnant. She noted that family planning is also empowering to men.

Panhandle Health District operates on a sliding scale for family planning services. People who have low income or no insurance are encouraged to come in, Meyer said; however, PHD also accepts insurance.

“We won’t turn anyone away for services,” Meyer said. “We assist many patients with their bill, including providing payment plan options.”

The goal of family planning is to make sure every pregnancy is timed for the health and well-being of mother and child, Ghirarduzzi said. To that end, she advised individuals to start conversations with their physicians early and to communicate with their partners before engaging in sex.

“Family planning is an important part of your health,” Ghirarduzzi said. “Your reproductive health is a big part of your overall well-being.”

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**Panhandle Health District** provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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