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15 July 2020

Mr Aurelijus Veryga
Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania
Vilnius str. 33, LT-01506
Vilnius, Lithuania

Dear Minister Veryga

I enclose a FIGO statement on the use of the hormone impregnated intrauterine system in support of the Lithuanian Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

We gather that there was the promise of funding which has now been withdrawn. This is most unfortunate as the system is cost effective, prevents unwanted pregnancies, treats menstrual disorders and lasts five years. The numbers to be purchased were small and would have helped a particularly vulnerable group of women at a very difficult time.

Thank you for your attention and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Professor Mary Ann Lumsden
FIGO Chief Executive

Statement on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights - Lithuania

The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) advocates on a global stage for an increased focus on the health and well-being of women and children, and the reduction of disparities in healthcare available to them, recognising that the right to health is not dependent upon civil status or nationality. Health is a human right, and all women and children deserve access to the highest possible standards of physical, mental, preventive, reproductive and sexual health care. This right must hold true regardless of their legal status and wherever women and children live.

Background

The *Lithuanian Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists applied to the Lithuanian Health Ministry for reimbursement of a long acting reversible contraception (LARCs) method for girls and women aged 15-20 years: the hormonal intra-uterine device (IUD). Under current government policy there is no reimbursement for contraception in Lithuania.

The OBGYN Society is able to request and apply for only one device or drug. The specialists selected the most effective form of LARC based on efficacy and cost, the levonorgestrel 13.5 mg IUD (referred to as the LNG-IUSystem). This hormonal LARC additionally provides effective treatment for troublesome menstrual disorders, which is a common problem in adolescent girls. Based on the overwhelming scientific information in support of LARCs and the goal of decreasing teenage pregnancies, the order was signed by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania in April 2020.

However, the Minister of Health rescinded this decision in response to public pressure. The Lithuanian Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists requests a statement from FIGO in support of access to long-acting contraception.

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<https://www.figo.org/lithuanian-association-obstetricians-and-gynecologists-laog>

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the *leading cause of death for girls age 15-19 globally and the **Sustainable Development Goal 3, which addresses good health and well-being, can only be achieved if contraception is a right and not a privilege. Teenage pregnancies have increased adverse pregnancy outcomes, including anaemia, hypertension, depression, and low birthweight, stillbirth and neonatal deaths. Unmarried pregnant adolescents may experience increased intimate partner violence, and are at an increased risk of education interruption and the concomitant impact on social and long-term well-being.

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<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-pregnancy>

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<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>

FIGO Ethics guidance states:

- We must advocate for a woman's right to information, education and decision-making in family planning.
- We must advocate for women's rights to make decisions related to sexual relationships.
- We must advocate for the required resources and services that ensure their right to attain the highest health standard of sexual and reproductive health and the ability to benefit from scientific progress.
- We must foster a respectful dialogue based on the best evidence to influence practices, policies and the law.

FIGO supports the Lithuanian Association of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the Minister of Health in providing long-acting contraception in the form of levonorgestrel 13.5 mg intrauterine device, to young women age 15-19 years. It is clear that the goal is to provide the highest standard of health care to these vulnerable women. We commend their dedication and service to the women of Lithuania.

About FIGO

FIGO is a professional organisation that brings together obstetrical and gynecological associations from all over the world.

FIGO's vision is that women of the world achieve the highest possible standards of physical, mental, reproductive and sexual health and wellbeing throughout their lives. We lead on global programme activities, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.

FIGO advocates on a global stage, especially in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pertaining to reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health and non-communicable diseases (SDG3). We also work to raise the status of women and enable their active participation to achieve their reproductive and sexual rights, including addressing FGM and gender based violence (SDG5).

We also provide education and training for our Member Societies and build capacities of those from low-resource countries through strengthening leadership, good practice and promotion of policy dialogues.

FIGO is in official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO) and a consultative status with the United Nations (UN).