Weekly News Review – week ending 29 December 2017

A round-up of the week’s most important, Africa-focused Family Planning and Reproductive Health reporting

(The Center for International Reproductive Health Training (CIRHT) at the University of Michigan seeks to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity from unsafe abortion in developing countries through pre-service training in evidenced based contraception and comprehensive abortion care for medical and midwifery students. This weekly news review is one way we hope to keep an ongoing conversation with our partners and the global reproductive health community. Hyperlinks in the text lead to relevant articles. A full list of articles, many of which are not mentioned in the review, can be found at the bottom of the document.)

Mixed messages

A review of the quiet news week between Christmas and New Year’s Day reveals the mixed messages that surround the basic health rights of women and girls to access contraception and comprehensive abortion care. In Kenya, one group is promoting reproductive health for people with disabilities, including contraception, while in another part of the country a church is establishing an “anti-contraceptive movement.” While Rwandan MPs want family planning services “beefed up, an editorial in Uganda calls family planning “un-African”. In Zimbabwe, an article notes the major health concern of illegal abortion – attributable to 30% of maternal mortality – and the conflicting laws that sow confusion and promulgate the practice.

In the US, an article in USA Today notes, “Nearly 50 years ago, then-Rep. George H.W. Bush of Texas called family planning a ‘public health matter’ and pushed for the first federal measure to provide money for free birth control. Another Republican, President Nixon, signed that law and called for a national commitment to provide family planning services in the next five years ‘to all those who want them but cannot afford them.’” And yet the Trump Administration continues its assault on basic contraception access. Could evidence make a difference? Colorado experienced a record drop – 54% between 2009 and 2017 – in teen pregnancy, thanks to a program that provides free or low-cost IUDs for teens.

Kenya

Group in Meru is promoting reproductive health for persons with disabilities, MediaMax/K24, 29 Dec 2017

Church to establish anti-contraceptive movement, The Standard, 27 Dec 2017

Rwanda

MPs want family planning services beefed up, The New Times, 26 Dec 2017

Uganda

Foreign ideologies kill African family values, Daily Monitor, 29 Dec 2017
Zimbabwe

Illegal abortion: A major public health concern, The Herald, 27 Dec 2017

Global/General

Iowa agency to release data on new family planning program, WOWT, 29 Dec 2017

In Colorado, good sense trumped ideology on teen pregnancy, Coloradoan, 29 Dec 2017

After a Bumpy 2017, Texas Reproductive Rights Need an Electoral Boost, Dallas Observer, 29 Dec 2017

How TV Is Tackling Abortion and Pregnancy in Trump's America, Glamour, 29 Dec 2017

2017 in Quotes: The War on Women and Abortion, Texas Freedom Network, 29 Dec 2017

How To Fight For Reproductive Rights In 2018 By Sticking To These New Year Resolutions, Elite Daily, 29 Dec 2017

Think 2017 Was Bad For Reproductive Rights? Here’s What To Watch Out For In 2018, Sleek Arena, 29 Dec 2017

Will abortion become a key issue for Kentucky Legislature in 2018?, Courier Journal, 28 Dec 2017

Looking Beyond Trump and Building Toward Reproductive Justice, Truth Out, 28 Dec 2017

New Maryland law makes contraceptives more affordable, easier to get, Baltimore Sun, 28 Dec 2017

From pink pussyhats to rape laws, how women's rights advanced despite adversity in 2017, Reuters, 28 Dec 2017

A cruel new front in the war on reproductive rights, Boston Globe, 28 Dec 2017

Federal Judge Blocks Another Part Of 2016 State Anti-Abortion Law, WBOI Indiana, 27 Dec 2017

Queensland Wants To Hear Your Thoughts On Whether Abortion Should Remain A Crime There, BuzzFeed, 27 Dec 2017

New Oregon laws taking effect on Jan. 1, Oregon Live, 27 Dec 2017

Quad Cities' sole abortion clinic will close Friday, Planned Parenthood says, Des Moines Register, 27 Dec 2017

Trump takes birth control back into court, USA Today, 27 Dec 2017

Boots criticised over failure to cut price of morning-after pill, Guardian, 27 Dec 2017

Curbing Overpopulation, The Nation (Pakistan), 27 Dec 2017

2017: The year in abortion and birth control, Lady Parts Justice League, 27 Dec 2017

Gates Foundation boosted funding for birth control, women's rights in 2017, AP, 26 Dec 2017
Safe abortion access needed for Iowa and beyond, Des Moines Register, 26 Dec 2017

CCI to discuss taxing couples having more than one child, The Nation (Pakistan), 26 Dec 2017

MPs' call for two-child norm ill-founded as India's fertility rate goes down, PTI News (India), 26 Dec 2017

Nepal: Gender-Based Abortions Threaten Society, Eurasia Review, 26 Dec 2017

Queensland orders review of abortion laws, The Australian, 26 Dec 2017

Injectable contraceptive for women launched in Telangana, Indian Express, 24 Dec 2017

Ending unsafe abortions The Hindu, 24 Dec 2017

Ohio Gov. John Kasich signs down syndrome abortion ban, NBC News, 23 Dec 2017