

Fall 2008

News from Planned Parenthood Mar Monte



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NO on Proposition 4: Parental Notification Initiative

On Election Day this November, voters will be faced with the third and most destructive parental notification initiative to have been put on the ballot in the last four years by the same small group of ultra-conservative men. The campaign to defeat Proposition 4 is underway. This third and worst attempt once again puts our teenagers' health at risk by limiting access to safe, quality medical care and counseling for vulnerable pregnant teens.

Parents rightfully want to be involved in their teenagers' lives, and would want their daughters to come to them if they were facing an unexpected pregnancy. The majority of teens do involve their parents, but not all teens live in homes where that kind of communication is possible. Proposition 4 could force those teens to delay medical care or turn to self-induced or illegal back alley abortions or worse. The campaign to defeat Proposition 4 understands that the most important thing is keeping teens safe.

No law can mandate family communication, and while parental notification may sound good, in the real world it puts teenagers in real danger. The San Jose Mercury News calls Prop. 4 "the most deceptive measure on the California ballot this fall." Planned Parenthood is joining forces once again with coalition partners throughout the state of California, such as the California Medical Association, the California Teacher's Association and the California Association of School Counselors, to inform voters and protect teen safety.

Phone banks, voter outreach, volunteer recruitment and trainings are underway in your area and across the state. We need your help more than ever in this busy election year to inform voters about the dangers of Proposition 4 and the importance of voting 'NO' on November 4th.

Visit www.noonprop4.org or contact fran_linkin@ppmarmonte.org for more information, sign up for local 'No on 4' volunteer events, and donate to the campaign.

California Budget Slashing Puts PPMM Patients at Risk

Both Planned Parenthood Mar Monte medical and education services received substantial cuts in the California state budget signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger 85 days after the constitutional deadline. This record-breaking delay of the approval of a state budget and the cuts it contains continue to erode an already fragile health care system, severely impacting Planned Parenthood Mar Monte and other community health care providers.

Ten percent cuts in Medi-Cal reimbursement through Feb. 28, 2009 and 1% cuts thereafter means significant decrease in revenue of \$1,050,000 for Planned Parenthood Mar Monte, limiting our ability to maintain and expand access to healthcare for low-income Californians. It also means that fewer doctors will take referrals for specialty services, unwilling to accept these unconscionably low reimbursement rates.

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte's effective teen pregnancy prevention programs were also severely impacted by the governor's completely unexpected line item veto of most of these programs statewide, resulting in cuts of over \$400,000 in revenue for PPMM's education programs. As a result, far fewer at-risk teens can be reached - funding for the Male Involvement Program and Teen Smart Outreach was eliminated entirely and Information and Education was cut by a third.

Today we ask that you continue to support Planned Parenthood Mar Monte so that we are able to continue to provide the services and critical education programs that enable us to successfully achieve our mission. Without your involvement during this difficult time, so many families will lack the access to preventive health care and comprehensive sexuality education. We remain optimistic that with your support and creative service delivery solutions we will continue to make a difference in the lives of those who have nowhere else to turn.

Reaching Out to Pregnant and Parenting Teens in Santa Clara County

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte develops and administers the Adolescent Family Life Program (AFLP) and Cal-Learn Program, which are comprehensive case management programs for pregnant and parenting teens in Santa Clara County. The goals of the program are to promote a healthy and nurturing environment for clients and their families, reduce the incidence of low birth weight babies to teen mothers, and assist clients with completing their high school diploma or GED. Case managers work with the teens to assess five key areas: education, health, nutrition, parenting, and psychosocial issues. An individual service plan is then developed and tailored to meet the needs of the teen and his/her family. PPMM has a staff of 17 who implement this important program, enabling us to serve more than 600 clients. Since taking over the program from Santa Clara County in July of 2007, the program has grown by 50%.

Our experience with teen mothers in our award winning Teen Success program for teen moms with one child was a key factor in PPMM winning the county's bid for AFLP and Cal-Learn. Teen Success has an 18-year history of supporting pregnant and parenting teens and encouraging them to maintain their family size, complete their education, and develop future goals. With strong education, support, and linkage to clinic services, Teen Success has been successful in delaying a second pregnancy until participants complete their high school, GED or vocational education. Since Teen Success began in 1990, more than 1,600 teen moms have participated in the program.

Teen Success Morgan Scholarship Winners

Being a pregnant teen has received much publicity lately. The stories presented in teen magazines and movies are very different from the challenges faced by real life teen parents. Being a teen parent is difficult — very difficult, but with the support, guidance and instruction of the Teen Success program, pregnant and parenting teens are creating brighter futures for themselves and their children as they work to set and accomplish their goals. The following are profiles of Teen Success mothers who have been accepted into college and other post-secondary education with the help of Teen Success and the Morgan Scholarship program.

Erika

When Erika came to Teen Success in Mountain View in 2006, she was a 15-year-old who had a three-month-old son and a very uncertain future. Now she is a high school graduate who is attending DeAnza College this fall, and she's planning a career as a registered nurse.

It took finding Teen Success for Erika to discover what kind of family is most important to her. When she was younger, she felt alienated from her divorced parents and sought acceptance in a street gang instead. Back then, the gang was her "family." But through Teen Success she found that having her son Alejandro was a chance to redefine her goals and priorities. She left the gang life behind to forge the kind of family she wants for her son. Every day, after attending rigorous classes at Alta Vista High School, Erika traveled on the bus with Alejandro to the Young Parents program at the Mountain View Adult Education center.

Erika's warmth and maturity made her an important part of her Teen Success group, and her hard work has been an inspiration. With the help of the Morgan Scholarship, she is ready to launch a bright future for both herself and her son.

Marlene

Marlene came to Teen Success in Watsonville four years ago, just after her 15th birthday when she was pregnant with her son Raymond. Since then she has been working hard to complete her G.E.D., and she is attending Hartnell College this fall.

She found the courage to leave an abusive relationship and set out to raise Raymond by herself, with the support of her Teen Success group. She said she learned to navigate a new life of being a working parent and student while "other kids my age are worrying about football games and school dances."

Even after she moved to Salinas last year, Marlene still made the weekly 20-mile drive to attend Teen Success. She is the sort of mom who always remembers everyone's birthday, and she often brought treats for her fellow Teen Success moms and their kids.

Her maturity, perseverance and commitment to achieving the goals she set for herself won the admiration of everyone in the group.

Increasing Access to Mammography Services

PPMM has partnered with the Community Mammography Access Project (CMAP) to make mammography screening more accessible to low-income, underinsured and uninsured women in Santa Clara County. Since its inception in 2007, 483 women have received screening mammograms at PPMM health centers.

In Santa Clara County, 30% of all breast cancers diagnosed in underserved women are detected at a late stage. Increasing access is critical in early detection and treatment. Unlike fixed-site programs, the use of mobile equipment affords greater convenience, shared resources, and a better understanding of breast cancer guidelines through culturally and linguistically appropriate education materials and staff.

CMAP currently rotates among six PPMM health centers where women receive clinical breast exams and screening mammograms. The events are occasions to celebrate breast health and include refreshments, educational items, gift bags, pink ribbons, and balloons in addition to the on-site mammogram. Our San Jose Health Center Referral Coordinator notes, “Patients are so happy about receiving mammography services at PPMM that a few of them come back the same day with their friends or family! Another patient left a donation after receiving her mammogram.”

“Patients are so happy about receiving mammography services at PPMM that a few of them come back the same day with their friends or family!”

Connecting Reproductive Health and the Environment

Troubling new research indicates that a broad range of chemicals — including many associated with everyday products such as household cleansers, flame retardants, personal care and beauty aids, and even plastic water bottles — could have a complex and far-reaching impact on men's and women's reproductive health and fertility, and healthy fetal development.

Although most people know someone who has been affected by infertility, birth defects or other childhood afflictions such as autism, many are not aware of the possible connection to common chemicals in our environment. We believe that once people are aware of the connections, they will be motivated to take action — both personally, to improve their health and the health of their families, and publicly, to ensure better policies for all. Long term objectives of this effort include:

- Expanding the traditional reproductive rights framework to include a focus on healthy women and healthy pregnancies
- Helping pro-choice advocates and organizations become articulate advocates for healthy pregnancies and healthy women
- Helping the reproductive rights community build a stronger working relationship with other parts of the progressive community, specifically the public and environmental health communities

We believe it is important to educate parents with small children and couples planning to become pregnant about the links between environmental contaminants and reproductive health, as well as establish long-lasting relationships with environmental and public health organizations to help further this work.

As part of this project PPMM, in collaboration with The Reproductive Health Technologies Project and Acterra, hosted a lecture series in Palo Alto to help educate the public about the effects of environmental contaminants on reproductive health.

In addition to our work in Palo Alto, PPMM has also been awarded funding to examine the impacts of pesticides on reproductive health in the Pajaro Valley (located in southern Santa Cruz and northern Monterey Counties). The Pajaro Valley is home to some of the most productive agricultural land in the world. One of the major issues impacting reproductive health is pesticides. According to the California Department of Pesticide Regulation, in 2000 188 million pounds of pesticides were applied to crops in California, whereas in 2006, 189.6 million pounds were applied — a rise that has been accompanied by an astonishing rate of birth defects and potential impact on fertility.

The goal of the collaborative is to examine the relationship between pesticide exposure and reproductive health, especially in relation to fertility and birth outcomes in the Pajaro Valley, and to develop best practices that will minimize the adverse effects of pesticides on reproductive health.

Leave Your Legacy Through Planned Giving

Extend your vision for improving the lives of others long after your lifetime with Planned Parenthood Mar Monte in your Charitable Estate Plans.

Start today by:

- Updating your will (or living trust) to reflect your charitable objectives. Without these documents, you surrender control of your property and assets to the courts.
- Contacting your financial advisor (a financial planner, lawyer or accountant) for help establishing a charitable gift.

Many times we learn of a bequest only after the donor has passed away. This does not allow us the opportunity to show our appreciation, nor does it allow for appropriate recognition during the donor's lifetime. If you have designated PPMM in your Charitable Estate Plans, please know that you have helped ensure that reproductive health care, sexuality education, Teen Success, and other youth development programs will continue far into the future.

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