

Winter 2009

## News from Planned Parenthood Mar Monte



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## A Message from Linda Williams: On Commemorating *Roe*

As we commemorate the 36th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, we have a pro-choice president, *Roe* is safe, and we can all kick back and relax for four years, right?

Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, of course. We grow complacent at our very great peril.

Some of you may share my memories of the Clinton administration. What happened after twelve years of anti-choice presidencies that eroded access to abortion and contraception? On day two, President Clinton reversed the yet-to-be-enforced domestic gag rule which prohibited any organization receiving U.S. government funding from using its own money to provide, refer for or advocate abortion. He appointed two pro-choice Supreme Court justices—Justice Ginsburg in 1993 and Justice Breyer in 1994. He vetoed anti-choice legislation when the Congress changed hands in 1994. That was pretty much it.

Very little ground was reclaimed for women's health. Title X, the federal family planning program, was never officially reauthorized because the topic of contraception was considered too controversial in the Congress. Women in the military didn't gain access to abortion. A plethora of anti-choice laws and regulations from the Reagan and first Bush years remained in place. States continued to enact ever more restrictive barriers to access with the blessing of the Supreme Court.

We need to do better this time. The damage is far greater and in some cases more insidious. Access to contraception and abortion has been severely limited for young, poor and rural women by a host of quiet administrative actions and obscure insertions in giant legislative packages as well as more overt and high profile laws, regulations and court cases. State laws throughout the country impose additional barriers and are routinely approved by the courts.

The federal court system from bottom to top has been systematically populated with anti-choice ideologues. Five of the nine U. S. Supreme Court justices are eager to uphold state laws that further erode the protections given women by *Roe*. Four are on record as wanting to overturn it outright.

Remember that *Roe v. Wade*, relentlessly attacked from the moment the decision came down, has been almost as steadily eroded. For twenty of the past twenty-eight years, we've had anti-choice presidents, frequently working in concert with an anti-choice Congress. Now we have a window of opportunity—just four years that we can count on—to reverse the damage and secure advances in access to reproductive health. It won't be automatic, it won't be easy, and success is by no means guaranteed.

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## *A Message from Linda Williams: On Commemorating Roe continued*

Many people aren't aware that neither House of Congress has a majority of pro-choice members. At least one key committee chair in the House is strongly and outspokenly anti-choice; he routinely blocked any legislation which contained provisions that strengthened access to contraception in the last session. The Senate Majority leader supports family planning but opposes abortion. And we are not the only constituency clamoring for redress of wrongs.

To overcome these formidable barriers, our voices must be clear, strong and persistent. We will need to cut through the clamor to be heard at the White House so our new president will make our issues a priority with Congressional leaders during his honeymoon period. We must secure a commitment from the Speaker to contain the hostile committee chair, and we must vigorously and vocally support and reward our champions in the Congress who carry legislation and work forcefully on our behalf.

Key provisions of the current recovery packages in both the House and the Senate expand access to contraception for poor women. Our first step is to strongly encourage our legislators to support those provisions. One of our next must be to ensure access to contraception and abortion is included in any health care reform package. We must advocate persistently to increase federal family planning funds, include all pregnancy-related services in Medicaid, eliminate funding for failed abstinence-only sexuality education, and reverse a myriad of destructive administrative policies and regulations. We must overtly support the nomination of pro-choice judges and justices to all levels of the federal courts, and we must consistently make ourselves heard above the inevitable anti-choice uproar.

If you aren't already part of our online action network, please sign up today at [www.ppaction.org/ppmm/join.html](http://www.ppaction.org/ppmm/join.html) and become part of a committed chorus to ensure that women have the health care options they need to be equal partners in society. Let's celebrate reproductive freedom today and expand it tomorrow, next week, next year and next decade for all the women for whom it remains a concept without reality.



Linda Williams  
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte President and CEO

# Economic Impact on PPMM

Every day we read or hear about elected officials debating what to do regarding the economic crisis facing California and the rest of the country. Draconian cuts to health care, education, and prevention services are daily headlines along with record unemployment and home foreclosure rates.

At Planned Parenthood Mar Monte (PPMM) our health centers are seeing an unprecedented increase in demand for services as people lose health insurance, can't afford co-payments, or because other health safety-net providers close their doors due to shrinking reimbursement rates and delays in payment. In December alone, 9,000 additional people sought our reproductive and general health services, a 21% increase from December 2007.

As policy advocates for our clients, we are often asked by policy makers, "why should family planning be protected when other taxpayer supported services are equally important?" Tough economic times demand we use a sensible fiscal approach to the delivery of services. UCSF research shows that every dollar California spends on family planning services saves an estimated \$2.76 in medical and social services costs in the year of expenditure and \$5.33 in the succeeding five years. In addition, each dollar spent costs the state just 10 cents; the state receives 90 cents from the federal government through a federal match.

At PPMM we provide health care to some of the poorest families in the country. A 2008 publication, *The Measure of America*, ranked the 20th Congressional District (CD) in the San Joaquin Valley dead last in the United States for quality of life with only half of the households posting annual incomes above \$16,767. Appalachia, an area synonymous with poverty fared better. Voluntary family planning services provided by PPMM are critical to helping families in that region and other areas of the affiliate begin the climb out of poverty.

Any additional cuts to teen pregnancy prevention programs coupled with less access to family planning services will prove costly to Californians in the years to come. Nine of the top ten counties in the state for teen births fall within PPMM's service area, and not surprisingly, seven are in San Joaquin Valley. In 2008 the Public Health Institute reported "the substantial economic costs to society associated with teen births cannot be ignored," as California's declining teen birthrate came to a halt. Nevada ranks 7th highest in teen birth rates in the country, and teen births cost Nevadans \$67 million. Teen births cost California \$1.7 billion dollars; the state ranks 26th in teen birth rates and highest in sheer numbers of teens giving birth, with 562,440 teens births annually.

Both Nevada and California cannot afford to cut back on family planning and teen pregnancy prevention services during tough economic times, and neither can Planned Parenthood Mar Monte. As more individuals depend on us for services we will be counting on you, our supporters, to work with us to fulfill our mission to ensure that every individual has the knowledge, opportunity and freedom to make every child a wanted child, and every family a healthy family.

Visit our website at [www.ppmarmonte.org](http://www.ppmarmonte.org) to find out how you can get involved to help us protect our services and thereby create a healthier "bottom-line" for all Californians and Nevadans.

# PPMM Weighs in on National Health Care Discussion

Planned Parenthood Mar Monte took the Health Care Conversations request from the Obama/Biden transition team as an opportunity to reach out to our active supporters and health care professionals in both California and Nevada to advise the new Administration on how to reform our nation's health care. We hosted house parties, attended staff meetings, and sent electronic surveys, then compiled the results from dozens of respondents. Not surprisingly the costs associated with health care or health insurance topped the list followed closely by the need to invest in preventative medicine and increase real access for all. PPMM also contributed significantly to the national Planned Parenthood health care reform agenda, *Women's Health Matters: Planned Parenthood's Agenda to Ensure Health Care for All*, which has been circulated to the Obama administration. The agenda prioritizes affordability, accessibility, quality of care, comprehensive health care coverage, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services. We will continue to work with those who can influence public policy to reflect the needed changes. And regardless of policies we will continue to meet the needs of our patients, providing them with quality care.

Sign up today at [www.ppaction.org/ppmm/join.html](http://www.ppaction.org/ppmm/join.html) to add your voice to our advocacy efforts.

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***We will continue to meet the needs of our patients,  
providing them with quality care.***

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# January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

Cervical Cancer afflicts nearly 12,000 women annually according to the Center for Disease Control. Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is the most widespread STD in the United States, and certain strains of HPV cause cervical cancer. Six in ten women who contract cervical cancer either never had a Pap Smear or put it off for more than five years. Planned Parenthood provides quality cancer screening and offers the HPV vaccine. To be an advocate for education and prevention of cervical cancer and HPV disease, you can:

- Inform yourself and others about cervical cancer, HPV disease, and the importance of early detection.
- Encourage women in your life to talk with their health care providers about how they can best protect themselves from cervical cancer. To locate a Planned Parenthood health center near you visit [www.ppmarmonte.org](http://www.ppmarmonte.org).
- Consider getting the HPV vaccine for daughters who are 9—18 years old or if you are a woman under the age of 27.

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# PPMM Hosts Lennox Foundation

On October 4th, 2008, a VIP presentation was given to the nine Board Members of the Lennox Foundation, a long-time grantor of Planned Parenthood Mar Monte. Josephina Lopez, health center Manager for Salinas, was there to greet them, and began by giving the Board an extensive tour of the Health Center. Cathy Bright, Area Services Director and Ruth Rachel, Development Director for the Coast region gave presentations about the specific services and educational programs that we provide in Monterey County. The morning's highlight was a presentation given by three Teen Success graduates who spoke about all that PPMM had done for them and what they had been able to accomplish due to the program. Megan Hall, Educator, introduced the young women to the Board and there were many follow up questions. The Lennox Foundation has most recently funded Teen Success, Teen Talk, the HIV Wellness Mentor Program, and gave a major donation to help with the construction of the Salinas Health Center in 2001.