

IF I BECOME pregnant, I'll become famous. My girlfriend and I will build a shrine in honor of the Divine, because only a queer miracle could lead us to create a third life without assistance. Luckily for us, this isn't an issue we belabor because we don't plan to be parents. For many in the LGBT community, pregnancy is a concern of the straight world.

Although LGBT reproductive-health needs can differ from those of heterosexuals, the LGBT community needs Planned Parenthood. The threats from the U.S. Congress to defund Planned Parenthood should scare LGBT and straight alike. Just as straight people don't only have sex in marriage, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people don't only have sex with one type of partner. A transgender person may be able to conceive, a bisexual person may be with a person of the opposite sex and not every gay man or lesbian is exclusively with members of the same sex. Diversity exists in the bed place. Heaven forbid, rape can happen to anyone, and the fallout can be life-changing. Even people who abstain from sex have reproductive health care needs.

Some Planned Parenthood services may be overlooked because the Planned Parenthood name implies a strict focus on parenthood. In actuality, the organization focuses on family planning, contraception and disease prevention. For an international organization founded more than 90 years ago, the strategy of having a name that works in assorted cultures throughout many sociopolitical periods is vital. Planned Parenthood's understated title serves it well.

What doesn't serve it well is the misinformation many Americans have about Planned Parenthood. Ill-informed politicians and pro-life activists have launched a vendetta against federal funding for Planned Parenthood because the organization provides abortions as one of its services. Those against funding the group claim federal dollars pay for abortions, and that abortions are the focus of Planned Parenthood. They're wrong.

The law forbids the use of federal funds for providing abortions except when pregnancy is a

[THE POINT]

Unplanned Parenthood

[BY TRYCE CZYCZYNSKA]

result of rape, or when remaining pregnant risks a woman's life. Despite the law, the idea that Planned Parenthood is an abortion factory is so prevalent that a divide over funding the organization almost shut down the government during budget talks for this year. Even when President

Barack Obama and fair-minded supporters refused to defund Planned Parenthood, a second vote was granted on whether the organization should remain funded. For now, Planned Parenthood is "safe," but its safety is fleeting. The budget deal is temporary and efforts to push a conservative agenda persist.

You may have heard that during the budget debates Sen. Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) announcement to the Senate, "well over 90 percent of what Planned Parenthood does" are abortions. He's lying. When confronted with his grave miscalculation, he claimed he wasn't trying to be factual. Unfortunately, his fabrication is replayed in conservative media as if it were true. Although Kyl's claim is absurd, it is the Gospel to those



who fear a woman's right to choose and equality for the masses.

The truth about Planned Parenthood is that they provide public access to reproductive health care through direct service, education and advocacy.

In California, more than 90 percent of the health care Planned Parenthood provides is preventive. Nationally, 97 percent of the care the organization provides is preventive, with only 3 percent of its services being related to abortion. All of the care through federally funded programs is preventive. Preventive care includes testing for sexually transmitted diseases (STD) and HIV/AIDS, screening for breast, cervical and testicular cancer, providing birth control and education on being healthy. Planned Parenthood even provides tests for anemia, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Although the risk of defunding Planned Parenthood has been deemed a threat to women's health care, at least 10 percent of those who receive services through the organization in California are male. Planned Parenthood has helped so many people that one in every five women in the country has been a client of Planned Parenthood at least once.

In this harsh economy with its high unemployment rate, increasing numbers of Californians are without health insurance. At Planned Parenthood, no one is turned away for lack of funds.

While all of Planned Parenthood's services are available for LGBT and straight communities, some services are specific to LGBT needs, such as its relationship counseling that addresses the diverse LGBT populations. In California, Planned Parenthood facilities in Orange and San Bernardino counties have an extensive LGBTQ Resources Guide (www.pposbc.org). The Mar Monte Planned Parenthood affiliate, with clinics in Fresno, Sacramento and Santa Cruz, offers specialized transgender services, including hormone therapy (www.ppmarmonte.org).

It's clear that Planned Parenthood is committed to preventive care. Most of us know that

prevention costs less than a cure, so we have to wonder what's behind the issue of defunding Planned Parenthood. It likely isn't about the national budget. What's truly at stake is the fundamental right to self-determination and the assurance that our government protects the sovereignty of our bodies. This sovereignty includes all our expressions through love and marriage, abstinence or multiple partners, through propagation or the desire to remain childless. People deserve the right to express individuality and to protect their health in the process. Unfortunately, these rights are continually under assault.

For now, Planned Parenthood remains a federally funded organization, providing health care and advocating for greater legal protections. But, that's for now. The budget negotiations for 2012 are on the horizon. Those talks are expected to threaten health care and personal freedoms again.

When the 2011 budget fight involved a vote in the House over barring Planned Parenthood from providing care through federal programs, at least 45,923 people made phone calls to Congress to proclaim their support of the organization. At least 825,268 people signed an open letter to Congress demanding an end to the attacks on Planned Parenthood. Be prepared to display this support again.

Our best remedy against diminished access to care is to stay informed. Ask to be notified of changes in the political landscape by writing Planned Parenthood at pponline@ppfa.org or visiting www.plannedparenthood.org. Let your senators know you support funding Planned Parenthood every time the issue arises. You can be linked to your state senator by calling (202) 559-1164.

Once a loss is created in health care rights, which are equal rights, it's sure to have a domino effect that stresses us all, yet the services provided by Planned Parenthood affords equal access to health care for all. You can help prevent future losses by being part of the gains. **BC**

just **10** minutes...

with **Dr. Shaun Travers,**

Co-Chair of the San Diego LGBT Community Center's Board of Directors and Campus Diversity Officer at the University of California, San Diego

(BLADE CALIFORNIA) THE CALIFORNIA SENATE PASSED LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REQUIRE GAY HISTORY TO BE INCLUDED IN SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULA AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CALIFORNIA. PENDING PASSAGE IN THE ASSEMBLY AND THE GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE, CALIFORNIA WOULD BE THE FIRST STATE TO IMPLEMENT GAY HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM. JUST HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS TO OUR COMMUNITY?

(Shaun Travers) This is certainly a great step forward. By including fair and accurate information about LGBT people and history in instructional materials, Senate Bill 48 will improve student safety, reduce bullying, enrich the learning experiences of all students and promote an atmosphere of safety and respect in California schools. *our cause. The cause was*

WITH PASSAGE, WHAT CHANGES CAN WE EXPECT IN OUR SCHOOLS, AND HOW SOON WILL WE SEE THESE CHANGES?

The bill does a couple of things: It adds sexual orientation and gender identity to the state's existing anti-discrimination protections, so the policies that exist currently simply expand to include our community; and it also prohibits bias in school activities, instruction and instructional materials. That means

[just 10 minutes ... continued on page 24]