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CHOICE

PPSFL Takes Action on Health Care Reform

by Casey Martinson

In mid-March, members of the Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes staff joined their Planned Parenthood colleagues from around the country for the National Conference in Washington D.C.

CEO Joe Sammons and Director of Development Alicia Kenaley met with Rep. Maurice Hinchey and Sen. Chuck Schumer, as well as staff from Sen. Kristen Gillibrand's office. With Congress in turmoil over the health care reform debate, we were grateful for the opportunity to make our voices heard and for the firm support of these progressive legislators.

As the week drew to a close, it became clear that the House was preparing to vote on health care that weekend, and there was serious concern that Rep. Bart Stupak might find a way to force a ban on abortion coverage into the final bill. With Democrats scrambling to find the 216 votes needed to win, four New York legislators were still on the fence: Reps. Michael Arcuri, Michael McMahon, Scott Murphy, and Bill Owens.

Though Rep. Stupak's supporters were dwindling, it was clear that the fate of health care reform would hinge on just a handful of votes. Would Democratic leaders feel compelled to buy the votes of a few anti-choice holdouts by agreeing to Stupak's demands? Clearly, we needed to take action.



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LETTER FROM JOE SAMMONS, CEO

Greetings to all, and a happy spring!

The past few months have been momentous for the staff, volunteers, and board of PPSFL, and for all supporters of sexual health and reproductive rights. From health care reform to new building plans in Ithaca and Hornell, to new education and rape crisis staff positions – even in the toughest economic times that we’ve ever faced, we work tirelessly to meet the needs of our patients and our communities.

The historic passage of health care reform can be summarized with two key points: expanded access to care for millions, and terrible restrictions on coverage for abortion services. We applaud the first – since 70% of the patients we serve come in without private insurance, expanded coverage is good for our patients and good for us. Unfortunately, the “Nelson Amendment” places unreasonable restrictions on abortion coverage that may have serious consequences for women’s reproductive freedom. Abortion is a safe, legal medical procedure; we can not, and will not, accept provisions that allow politicians or insurance providers to interfere with the right of every woman to make her own personal and private decisions about whether and when to have a child.

Outside of Washington D.C., we have been busy at home as well, moving forward steadily with new building projects in Hornell and Ithaca. We’ve hired two new educators, including a full-time educator based in Corning who will serve all of Steuben County. Our Rape Crisis program is fully staffed and is beginning an exciting partnership with the Schuyler County District Attorney’s office. And RCST’s recent production of *The Vagina Monologues* was a tremendous success.

We remain committed to the vision that we’ve honored for more than 40 years – advancing the mission in every region of our affiliate by providing exceptional services, honest education, and fearless advocacy. We couldn’t do this without our incredibly generous and dedicated supporters, amazing staff and volunteers, and hard-working board members. This newsletter highlights the fruits of your labors and contributions.

While we continue to face tough economic and political challenges, it is often said that in every crisis, there is opportunity. With your continued support, we will seize every opportunity that unfolds as we move forward in building a brighter future for our community. We will have new buildings, better programs and services, and a renewed commitment to fighting for reproductive freedom everywhere.



All my best,

Joe Sammons
President / CEO

PPSFL TAKES ACTION ON HEALTH CARE REFORM

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On Friday afternoon, we contacted staff and board members, many of whom were able to take action with last minute e-mails and phone calls to the four undecided New York legislators. State-wide, at least 874 advocates took action in response to an alert from Family Planning Advocates of New York. Ultimately, advocates from across the state were able to sway both Reps. Murphy and Owens to vote “yes,” and the health care bill (aka the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act) passed by just seven votes. Most importantly, it passed without any Stupak amendments.

This historic legislation will secure the largest expansion of health insurance coverage in a generation and help ensure access to life-saving care for tens of millions, including the millions of women and families served by Planned Parenthood every year. For that, we celebrate. Thank you to everyone who helped us push Congress in the right direction.

Unfortunately, much work remains to be done. Some elements of the reform package are cause for grave concern, particularly the “Nelson amendment,” which severely restricts private health insurance coverage for abortion. This provision needs to be fixed, and Planned Parenthood will work tirelessly to make that happen in the weeks and months ahead. With the help of our dedicated supporters, we will achieve truly comprehensive health care reform that protects the interests of American women and families.

If you would like to get more involved with our advocacy efforts, please e-mail action@ppsfl.org.

GET INFORMED AND GET INVOLVED!

www.plannedparenthoodaction.org

- » Learn about our issues
- » Sign up for action alerts
- » Connect to your legislators

The Low Down on Paps

NEW RECOMMENDED SCREENING GUIDELINES

Over the last ten years, much has been learned about the causes of cervical cancer and the effects of treatment of cervical cancer and its precursors. Based on the most current medical science, Planned Parenthood has recently adopted the following new recommendations for Pap screening schedules from the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology:

1. Women should delay their first Pap test until age 21, regardless of age at first intercourse. In the U.S., cases of cervical cancer in adolescents are *extremely* rare. High grade cervical dysplasia, a cervical cancer precursor, is frequently cured by the immune system in adolescents, and needless treatment creates a higher risk of problems with future pregnancies. Thus, the risks of testing are greater than the benefits.
2. Women aged 21–29 should be screened every two years. We have learned that annual testing is not necessary since the precancerous process is prolonged.
3. Women age 30 and older who have had three consecutive normal Pap tests should be screened every three years. After three normal tests, the risk of a missed abnormality is very low.
4. Women over 30 who may have had a new exposure to HPV within the last three years should receive a Pap test and HPV testing. If there has been no possibility of new exposure to HPV in the last three years, it is appropriate for women to have only Pap screenings every three years.
5. There are risk factors that may cause cervical cancer to develop more rapidly or may place women at higher risk for developing cervical cancer. More frequent screening is recommended for women with the following issues:
 - * Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection
 - * Immunosuppression (e.g., those who have received renal transplants)
 - * Exposure to diethylstilbestrol (DES) before birth
 - * Previous treatments for cervical cancer or cervical dysplasia
6. Women infected with HIV, including adolescents, are at higher risk and should receive Pap screening twice in the first year after diagnosis, and then continue with Pap tests annually.
7. Women who have had a total hysterectomy for a noncancerous condition and who have had no severe abnormalities on Pap tests may discontinue Pap screenings. Pap tests are not designed to screen for the very rare vaginal cancers.
8. Women between ages 65 and 70 may discontinue Pap screenings if they have had 3 or more consecutive negative tests and no abnormal test results in the last 10 years.

These new guidelines do not eliminate the need for regular health checks.

Women using hormonal contraceptives need to have their blood pressure monitored and update their medical history each year to assess new risk factors or possible side effects. Patients should receive STI screenings any time there is a possibility for new exposure. Women over 40 need annual breast exams. Planned Parenthood will determine when visits are necessary based on each patient's age and medical history, and any problems they may be experiencing.

New medical recommendations are always adopted with the patients' best interests in mind. Planned Parenthood is committed to providing exceptional health care, based on the most current medical science, for the benefit of our patients and our community. Please call or visit your Planned Parenthood health center for more information, and pick up a helpful recommended screening card to help you determine when you should schedule an appointment.

VAGINA WARRIORS INVADE CORNING

by Lauren West

Recently, the staff and volunteers of Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier (RCST) along with some incredible community members, summoned up our inner divas and donned our finest tiaras, boas, and even a bathrobe and galoshes! The result was two fantastic nights of Eve Ensler's award winning play "The Vagina Monologues." The event, held this year at 171 Cedar Arts Center in Corning on March 26 & 27, is one of RCST's largest annual fundraisers. This year's performances were well attended and raised approximately \$1800 which will go directly to assisting the women, men, and children RCST serves. Additionally, the event is an excellent way of reaching out to the community and reminding them that sexual violence does exist and that RCST is here to help.

If you missed out on all the fun this year, please consider joining us next year. It truly is an amazing event that benefits a very important cause!



Ally Payne performs one of her many roles in The Vagina Monologues.



RCST intern Melissa Sullivan, Jennifer Edger, RCST educator Cindy McInerney, and Diane Cook



Diane Cook with PPSFL Supply Coordinator Shelby Cook

PLEASE JOIN US

Want to pitch in on some easy special projects while strengthening the connections within our community of supporters? Mixed Company is a new volunteer program at

PPSFL where volunteers, board members, staff, and students will mix and mingle while providing support on fun projects. The group will meet at the Education Office on Seneca Street in Ithaca about once a month for just a couple of evening or weekend hours. If you have even one free hour per month that you would like to put to good use, then come get busy in Mixed Company!

E-mail Jenn Foy for an application or for more information at jennifer.foy@ppsfl.org.



SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR THE CONSTANCE E. COOK AWARD

Each year, PPSFL bestows the Constance E. Cook Award in recognition of outstanding contributions to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Award recipients may include individuals, groups or organizations in Tompkins County. If you know a person or group deserving such recognition, please let us know!

All nominations should be sent to Casey Martinson at casey.martinson@ppsfl.org by May 30, 2010.

Presentation of this award is made at PPSFL's Annual Celebration, to be held this September at the Corning Museum of Glass.

Elmira's Improvements

BENEFIT OUR PATIENTS, OUR STAFF, AND OUR COMMUNITY

by Maureen Kelly and Jeanne Bailey

The Elmira health center at PPSFL has become a shining example for the agency. The office's renovations are enabling the amazing Elmira staff to see more patients and increase the sexual and reproductive health of our community.

We have been able to make this happen because as a provider of reproductive and sexual health care services, we spend a lot of time looking at trends and data. We know that data drives decisions about funding and services; it also helps us to understand how and when people access our services, and helps us to develop more well-rounded, collaborative services to ensure that we are give our patients what they truly need. The data that we monitor closely tells us that nearly half (46%) of all 15-19 year-olds in the U.S. have had sex at least once, and a sexually active teen who does not use contraceptives has a 90% chance of becoming pregnant within a year. We are struck by the fact that a large majority of sexually experienced teens (74% of females and 82% of males) used contraceptives the first time they had sex, while of the 18.9 million new cases of STIs each year, 9.1 million (48%) occur among 15-24 year-olds. (*Facts on American Teens' Sexual and Reproductive Health*, Alan Guttmacher Institute, January 2010.)

New York has the fourteenth highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation (*U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2006) and the highest rates of gonorrhea among 15-24 year-olds - more than 4 times the average rate of the entire population. Chemung County has been identified by the New York State Department of Health as one of the counties with

the highest of these troubling trends in the state.

At PPSFL, we are paying attention to this data. We are proud to have worked collaboratively with several community groups and organizations for over 15 years through the Chemung County Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention program to address these issues in the Chemung youth population. And in 2006, our hardworking volunteers looked to our supporters to help us renovate and add a significant addition to our Elmira center on Church Street so we could better serve the needs of the community. We carefully planned the new space to combine resources for our education staff, rape crisis programming and outreach staff, and a top notch design for a remarkably welcoming and professional health center.

Today, the Elmira health center stands out as an example of what Planned Parenthood can do with well planned and coordinated services, a fierce commitment to meeting community needs, and an intentionally designed building. Now twice its original size, our patients at the Elmira health center are as pleased as we are to have such a beautiful center right downtown. Staff morale took a positive jump, which ultimately reflected on our work and patient relations. Our numbers have gone from a total of 1,900 clinician visits at the end of 2003 to 5,012 for 2009. That's a 152% increase in people served in our Elmira center!

This is but one highlight in the larger PPSFL story. Our staff works tirelessly in Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, and Tompkins Counties to remove barriers to care and increase access to education and support while providing truly exceptional services to increase community-wide sexual health. PPSFL's committed staff are working with legislators, advocates, and donors to make the Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes a provider of first choice in our region.



The renovated Elmira health center



From left to right: Elmira staff members Patty Pierce, Melinda Thompson, Ann LoVecchio, Penny Paluch, Alison Bobby

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NEED TO CONTACT US?

Health Centers

Corning	962-4686
Elmira	734-3313
Hornell	324-1124
Ithaca	273-1513
Watkins Glen	535-0030

Admin. & Development Offices

Ithaca	273-1526
Horseheads	796-0220

Sexuality Education & Outreach

Tompkins County	216-0021
Chemung County	734-3313
Chemung County	962-4686

Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier
 888-810-0093

TRIBUTES

Dec. 10, 2009 - Mar. 31, 2010

IN HONOR OF

Joan Adler

Wendy Heine

All of the people in her life

Kathy Hopkins

Gerald Beer

Steven V. and Beverly R. Beer

Mary Doss

Shirley Ladd and Chuck Guffman

Maralyn Fleming

Katherine P. Funk

Jean Gortzig

Dave and Peggy Dunlop

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Kathy and Ray Schlather

Christy Pambianchi

Elijah and Gail Baity

The hard-working PPSFL staff

Jonathan Kravitz

Louise Richardson

George and Kristina Finley
 Cheryl A. Jordan

The Thompson Family

Lori Zucchini and Mark Maier

Nianne VanFleet

Janet and Jon Corson-Rikert

Carol Warshawsky - Happy Birthday!

Sarita Warshawsky

IN MEMORY OF

Judith Aronson

Robert L. Aronson

Connie Cook

Bob and Ginny Powers

Ruth W. Darling

Robert and Martha Rideout

Edwina Devereux

Joan and Edward Ormondroyd

Dr. John Fenger

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Lois D. King

Pat and John Gaines

Constance Knowles Eberhardt Cook

Jane Crawford

Ingrid Kovary

Carole Cowan
 Terry and Dorian Fine
 Nahmin and Leah Horwitz
 Mary Kirkpatrick
 Paula Peter
 Mary Salton

A. Carl Leopold

Lynn B. Leopold

Gerry Muir

Anonymous

Marsha H. Murphy

Anonymous

Evelyn Peeler Peacock

Meleny Peacock

Dr. George Tiller

Carol Battenfeld

Richard N. White

Margaret C. White

Candace Widmer

Susan Robinson

Correction: A donation from Katherine P. Funk was made in honor of Maralyn Fleming. The donation originally appeared incorrectly as a donation in memory.

THREE VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE



Penny Whitford, Board Member and Hornell Clinic volunteer, says “My words to any would-be volunteer are open your ears and your heart. You will receive far more than you give. Be a lion in speaking to your friends about the wonderful work of Planned Parenthood and unapologetic in a woman’s right to choice.”



We asked Marissa Speno, Ithaca health center work study student, what words she would use to describe Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes. “Vital, proactive, women’s advocate, trusted, amazing!”



Stacey Mott, Horseheads administrative volunteer says “Volunteering at PPSFL has been a good experience to help sharpen my existing skills and learn some new ones. I believe this will be very beneficial in trying to get back into the work force. It has helped me get back out into the world. Volunteering for me has always been a good way to give back to my community.”

INCREASED PROTEST ACTIVITY IN ITHACA: YOU CAN HELP!

This spring, PPSFL’s Ithaca health center was targeted once again as a 40 Days for Life vigil location. 40 Days for Life is an international anti-choice campaign that primarily consists of holding protests outside of health centers for a forty day period twice each year. The group aims to put an end to a woman’s right to a safe, legal abortion procedure by means of prayer, fasting, and “peaceful vigil.”

We’ve seen many more protesters this spring than in previous years, and they’ve implemented a new tactic: pointing a video camera at our clinic doors while patients are entering and leaving. The protests are generally “peaceful” as they claim, but some of our patients tell us that they feel harassed by the 40 Days crowd. Our compassionate staff have been taking the time to help patients process these feelings in addition to all of the information pertaining to their visit.

With many other staff covering the duties of porch sitting and patient escorting, we haven’t had a pressing need for volunteers – yet. However, we are always looking for volunteers who would like to help PPSFL and our patients by being a welcoming, watchful presence at our doors. If you would like to volunteer for porch sitting/patient escorting, please contact Denise Townley at 796.0220 x304.



WHY I SUPPORT PLANNED PARENTHOOD



I work in patient services and I talk with patients that are struggling financially - I hear their stories. I've chosen to donate to the Abortion Fund as family planning services are on a sliding fee scale; abortion services are not. I'm happy knowing my small donation is helping someone really in need.

Evelyn Laskaris

Center Manager of Corning and Hornell Health Centers



How is signing up to donate to PPSFL through payroll deduction like getting an IUD? It hurts less than you think it will, and then it just keeps working without you even having to remember it's there! The benefits go on and on. One difference though...no strings attached to the donation.

Graham O

Nurse Practitioner



What?! They want money too? It can feel like that at a job that is tremendously fulfilling, but also demands so much on so many fronts at fabulous not-for-profit wages. Nonetheless, I donate because I'm passionate about our mission and desperately want Planned Parenthood to survive. I also donate because I hope that prospective and established donors will be moved to donate, and/or increase their donations, to an agency with staff who are also willing to make a financial sacrifice.

Joan Adler

Counselor



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Credits: *Editing & Layout* / Jenn Foy, *Photography* / Alicia Kenaley; Melissa Friedman; Casey Martinson, *Design* / Ancient Wisdom Productions, *Printing* / Arnold Printing