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CHOICE

Celebration 2009

On September 10, Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes held its Annual Celebration at Ithaca College's Emerson Suites. Over 130 supporters attended to re-energize and to hear Dr. Marty Klein, author of *America's War on Sex*, talk about why Planned Parenthood is the most important job in the world. Recognition was given to some very special people whose lives have intersected with our history and mission.

The Constance E. Cook Community Service Award was presented to **Sue and Jud Kilgore**, who have been so instrumental in our history and whose contributions to Planned Parenthood date back to our earliest years in Tompkins County. The award was presented by Jean Gortzig, last year's winner of the Constance E. Cook Community Service Award.

Also honored was **Barb Van Dine**, who received the Margaret Sanger-Katherine Houghton Hepburn Award. Barb has dedicated so much of her life to comprehensive sexuality education and healthy, honest approaches to sexuality and sexual health in Elmira and the surrounding area.

Please join us in congratulating Sue and Jud Kilgore and Barb Van Dine on their accomplishments!



Sue and Jud Kilgore win the Cook Award.

LETTER FROM JOE SAMMONS, CEO

Greetings! We are so pleased to present this revised "Choice" newsletter. Our goal is to brighten and broaden our communications to all of you so that you can get a sense of all the incredible work that we are doing and updates on issues that are important to all of us.

I'm sure it is no surprise to many of you that, so far, 2009 has been tough going for PPSFL. We received budget cuts from New York State, the death of Dr. Tiller saddened and angered us, the chaos of the New York State Senate prevented the passage of the most important choice legislation in a generation, and this summer, we saw the anti-choice forces' relentless attacks on reproductive freedom and community health. But through it all our staff, supporters, and volunteers have stayed focused on the work that matters most – our patients, their health, and their rights.

You see, in the face of tough times, challenging times, we have two core values that drive us: the first is perseverance – a dogged persistence to provide high quality, compassionate services to our patients and clients. And that is what we have done so far in 2009. Through September our visits were 6% higher than last year, with the majority of those patients' income at less than 150% of the federal poverty level and without private insurance. We have expanded our education programming to communities like Groton and Dryden for the first time, and our Rape Crisis staff have served more than 1,000 clients.

While perseverance is a core value of ours, another is to advance the mission, even in difficult times – not merely to survive, but to thrive. In 2009, we renewed our efforts to create new facilities in Hornell and Ithaca, we invested in a new space for our Education Center in Ithaca to provide new programming, and we have nearly completed a new, three-year strategic plan that will increase our capacity to lead and serve throughout our affiliate. We have a legacy of dreaming fearlessly that is crucial to who we are, and we need it to remain a powerful part of the engine that drives us in the months and years ahead.

Striking the balance between persevering through tough times and advancing the mission is not easy, but our staff and volunteers do that, in every department and program of our affiliate, all the time. I hope that you can see the results of some of that work in the articles and stories in this newsletter – I know I see these results every day as I visit our health centers, education offices, and volunteer programs, and talk to our staff and supporters in every community that we serve.



Thank you for your spirit and your support of the important work that we do!

Warmly,

Joe Sammons
President / CEO

brb — i'm learning 2 b safer

by Jennifer Foy

Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes has launched a *Safe Text Campaign* to teach safer texting, chatting, and social networking to area youth.

Teens and preteens have become avid texters and social network users. Texting and posting is fun, convenient, and helps youth stay connected to their peers. But this super-connectivity does raise some concerns about safety and responsibility. That's why Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes is providing students and parents with information about safe texting and posting through the *Safe Text Campaign*. The *Campaign* includes an educational program developed by our Southern Tier Sexuality Educator, Tammy Miller, as well as informative materials for parents, and an exciting viral video contest.



The *Safe Text* program is taught by our award-winning team of professional sexuality educators. Through games, interactive exercises, and guided discussion, students explore the social, ethical, and legal issues associated with electronic communication and the concept of privacy in social networking.

The *Safe Text* viral video contest has offered local youth the opportunity to create and submit a short viral video about safe technology use. Contest winners will enjoy the fulfilling experience of informing and empowering their peers, cash prizes, and a little time in the limelight at our Red Carpet Premiere Party on November 7 – all made possible by a generous \$1,000 grant from Rose's Youth Philanthropists and James Reed, Esq. of the Ziff Law Firm.

At Planned Parenthood, we believe that parental involvement is integral to teen sexuality education; with guidance and support, teens can make smart choices. Parents and

National Health Care Reform:

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED TO PROTECT WOMEN, COMMUNITIES

by Joe Sammons

Now that Congress is back in session, health care reform legislation is at a critical, precarious stage. Despite much of the noise and acrimony of the summer, there are bills in the Senate and the House that seem to agree on many elements of reform — expanded coverage, portability of coverage, and protection against denial of benefits due to pre-existing conditions. The question of the public option, as well as cost-cutting measures for Medicare, seem to be the critical stumbling blocks.

But of course, we cannot simply have a healthy, reasonable discussion of differences in policy. Instead, anti-choice groups are taking advantage of the good intentions of this reform to strike a blow at reproductive rights and women's health care. PPFA staff are camped out in the Capitol, working furiously to beat back all these anti-choice, anti-women efforts, and have been focusing on two critical messages:

* *Essential community providers like Planned Parenthood must be included in national health plans.* Health care reform's goal is to provide quality health care that is affordable and accessible to all. Essential community providers, like Planned Parenthood, community health centers, and others, have been doing exactly that for decades.

But anti-choice groups are working feverishly to eliminate us as eligible providers in national health care plans. We must contact our representatives now and urge them to defeat these irresponsible and harmful attacks. Tell them that health care reform without essential community providers isn't health care reform at all!

* *Women's health matters! Women cannot be worse off after health care reform than before!* Yet this is exactly what our opponents want: to eliminate birth control and other women's reproductive health measures from public – and in some cases, private – health insurance plans! Whatever health care reform turns out to be, we cannot allow women to be worse off than they are today.

Please help by taking action now. We cannot let these well-organized, well-funded right-wing activists hijack health care reform.

There are three ways that you can help:

1. *Call your congressional representatives* now to tell them that essential community providers **MUST** be a part of health care reform, and access to and affordability of reproductive health **CANNOT** be reduced as a result of any changes. The contact info for your representatives is in the box near this article.
2. *Get all of your friends and family to call their congressional representatives too.* A solid majority of Americans support the vital work that we do, and we have to keep up the pressure so that these elected officials stand by their constituents and protect women's health.
3. *Participate in a PPFA national phone bank.* In order to keep a steady drumbeat of pressure on targeted members of Congress, Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Planned Parenthood Action Fund regularly organize national phone banks. Please contact Melissa Friedman at (607) 273-1526, x121 to participate in the next national phone bank.

At PPSFL, we have had a delegation visit Representative Eric Massa, attended town hall meetings, and participated in phone banking and other activities to get these messages out. We need your help as we enter the critical last months of the year. National health care reform offers a great promise to decrease the number of uninsured and expand access to services. We support President Obama and all the members of Congress who are working to create positive, lasting reform. But we cannot let our opponents attack Planned Parenthood or the access to affordable reproductive health care that we have fought so hard to create and keep.

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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
Southern Tier	271-9685

Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier

888-810-0093

New York Legislative Update

by Joe Sammons

Here is some good news to pass along! In early September, the NYS Senate had a “Special Session” and passed two new laws that were “fantastic wins for the women and families of New York,” according to Tracey Brooks, the CEO of Family Planning Advocates.

They are:

- * The Protections for Reproductive Health Care Act (A.Hoyt /S.6112 Parker) - legislation that will build upon NY’s current clinic access law by creating enhanced penalties for anyone who causes injury or serious physical injury to a reproductive health care provider, an employee, or volunteer of a health provider that offers reproductive health care services, or a patient seeking such medical care.
- * The Restructuring of the Prenatal Care Assistance Program (A.8397A/ S.3257A) - a Department of Health (DOH) bill that will restructure the Prenatal Care Assistance Program to be in accordance with the new ambulatory pricing groups payment methodology and will provide the DOH with the flexibility to update the standards of care as they change.

Bi-partisan support was critical for both of these bills as the Democrats were down a Senator (Senator Foley’s father passed away). FPA called me early last week to assist with targeting our local State Senator, George Winner, and I called him myself prior to the session. I’m pleased to report that Senator Winner was one of nine GOP members to support our bills. After the session, I called Senator Winner and thanked him for his vote, in particular the clinic access bill.

It has certainly been a long, long year politically, with budget cuts in the winter, the NYS Senate chaos of June, and the health care reform debacle of this summer. It’s nice to get a win, and hopefully we can continue to have success on some key initiatives in months ahead.

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www.hinchey.house.gov

Learn about LARCs

Alicia Kenaley interviews Dana Dicostanzo

Move over birth control pills – there are some new and improved options on the block. Among them are two long-acting contraceptive methods, referred to as LARCs, which were developed over the past decade. These methods are extremely effective, safe, and reversible. This warrants further conversation! I talked with PPSFL clinician Dana Dicostanzo to learn more.

First, what does LARC mean?

LARC stands for Long Acting Reversible Contraception. LARC methods include intrauterine contraceptives (IUCs), contraceptive implants (Implanon), and injectable contraceptives (Depo-Provera). We know that LARCs offer many advantages over other contraceptive methods: they are highly effective, safe, and actually have the highest patient satisfaction among all methods.

What are the advantages of LARC methods over, let's say, using the birth control pill or a condom?

There is a great need in this country for birth control that is highly effective, “forgettable,” and reversible. Of the over 6 million pregnancies that occur yearly, almost half of them are unintended; that’s over 3 million unintended pregnancies yearly! And almost half of these unintended pregnancies end in abortion. A study on birth control pill use showed that half of users missed at least 3 pills in the 3rd cycle (which significantly reduces its effectiveness).

We also know that 20% of women who choose sterilization at age 30 years or younger later express regret. IUCs and other LARCs offer effectiveness as high as sterilization, but are readily reversible – and there is no chance to use it “incorrectly,” as they are “forgettable.”

A lot of people have a negative impression of IUCs (formerly referred to as IUDs). Is this warranted?

Absolutely not! IUDs were very popular in the 1960s and 1970s. In fact, 25% of American women of reproductive age used an IUD during this time period. Then, in the early 1970s, an IUD called the Dalkon Shield was produced by the A.H. Robins Company. Something about the design of this particular IUD resulted in an increased likelihood of infection and infertility in those women who used it. It was removed from the market in 1986, but the damage was done – use of the IUD plummeted to less than 2% over the next 10 years. Use remains low today despite all the positive things we know about IUCs. In fact, 18% of female OB-GYNs of reproductive age use IUCs. This should tell you something about the method.

Is it an involved process to get an IUC or Implanon put in place?

No, both are simple, office-based procedures.

So what are the drawbacks?

Obviously, no single birth control method is for everybody, and every method has benefits and drawbacks. It is important to look at a woman’s total health and assess with her which method will best meet her needs.

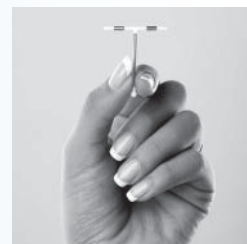
One obstacle to clinics offering these LARC methods is the higher initial cost that is incurred. Despite the higher cost of providing these birth control methods, I’m happy to say that PPSFL is one of the few affiliates in New York State to offer all of these LARC methods to all of our patients on a sliding fee scale.

LEARN MORE

A recent study by the Guttmacher Institute attributes 42% of unintended pregnancies in the United States to inconsistent or incorrect use of birth control methods. In the real world, 9% of pill users, 17% of condom users and 5% of injectable users will become pregnant during the first year of typical use. To make matters worse, about half of condom and injectable contraception users, and almost one-third of pill users, will discontinue use within a year.

IUC

- » Lasts five to twelve years, depending on type used
- » Has a first year failure rate of 0.1 – 1%



Implanon

- » Lasts three years
- » Has a first year failure rate of 0.1%



IN HONOR OF

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Anonymous

Noni Carpenter

Anonymous

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Preventing Cervical Cancer

by Alicia Kenaley

This past spring, Jade Goody, a well-known reality TV star in Britain, died of cervical cancer. She was 27 years old.

Her death serves as a sobering reminder that despite significant advances in the prevention, detection, and treatment of cervical cancer over the past 50+ years, we must be vigilant in our efforts to provide education about cervical cancer and human papillomavirus (HPV) and ensure access to appropriate health care services.

Every day, PPSFL's clinicians work to ensure the health and well-being of the women they see. Integral to the detection of pre-cancerous cells in the cervix, pap smears and colposcopies are critical procedures and are the first line of defense in the prevention of cervical cancer.

Here is one patient's story:

When I accepted a job as a professor and moved to Ithaca, I looked for a place to go for my annual exams. Ultimately, I decided to go to Planned Parenthood. I wanted a place where I would feel comfortable. I like the politics of Planned Parenthood and I like the fact that they treat a broad range of individuals. Because Planned Parenthood is open to such a broad population, it has developed a particular expertise.

Unfortunately, a couple of years ago I was notified that the results of my pap smear were abnormal. I came in to see Dr. Leslie, who did a colposcopy. Using a video monitor, she explained what we were looking at and diagnosed me with mild cervical dysplasia, a condition that could be monitored closely and treated if any change for the worse occurred.

At a follow up exam, I was tested for human papillomavirus (HPV) and subsequently had a second colposcopy. Dr. Leslie found that while the affected area was smaller, the cells had changed and I now had moderate to severe cervical dysplasia. She referred me to a doctor who did a [loop electrical excision procedure, referred to as a LEEP] to remove the affected area.

I think that everyone has said it's important to get a pap smear. The idea that people don't have access to routine pap smears is unimaginable, but it happens a lot. This is basic care that should be affordable and accessible to everyone. And I'm happy to bring my business to a place that provides access to necessary and life-saving health care services to all women, whether they are insured or not.

I think connected to this is the importance of raising awareness about HPV. When we're talking about arming people with information, HPV needs to be a part of the conversation. HPV is so incredibly common, but because there is so much stigma surrounding sexually transmitted diseases, people don't talk about it. And because nobody's talking about it, you don't get a sense of how prevalent it is.

While it's hard not to be scared about the long-term consequences of being infected with HPV and having cervical dysplasia, it's important to remember that cervical dysplasia is so treatable, and with proper care and monitoring, cervical cancer is usually preventable. I plan to continue to go to Planned Parenthood for treatment and follow-up care. I've been going to Planned Parenthood now for the past several years and feel I've established a good relationship with them. It's hard to imagine going anywhere else.

Your Help is Needed!

Please help us ensure that all women have access to life-saving colposcopies by donating to the Marty Lisberger Memorial/Cervical Cancer Prevention Fund. This fund subsidizes the cost of colposcopies for un- and under-insured women who need them. Now depleted, this fund has helped hundreds of women receive this critical procedure.

To make a contribution to this important fund, please contact Alicia Kenaley at (607) 273-1526 x134 or alicia.kenaley@ppsfl.org

2009 HPV & Cervical Cancer Facts

- » 11,270 new cases of cervical cancer will be diagnosed
- » 4,070 women will die from cervical cancer
- » 1,250,000 women will be diagnosed with cervical dysplasia
(National Cancer Institute)
- » 20 million Americans currently are infected with HPV
- » 6.2 million people become newly infected each year
- » AT LEAST 50% of sexually active men and women acquire HPV at some point in their lives
(Centers for Disease Control)
- » Men and 90-97% of women who get genital high-risk HPV have no symptoms.
- » In most cases, people are able to clear HPV infection in less than a year.
- » Women who develop cervical cancer have been infected with high-risk HPV for years, maybe even decades.

SAFE TEXT CAMPAIGN

continued from page 2

educators can help youth enjoy electronic communication safely, by explaining the potential ramifications that can result from poor decisions made in the use of these technologies, and encouraging them to think twice before hitting "send."

Want to Help?

If you would like help teaching young people you care for or work with about safe use of electronic communication, or if you would like information about other programs and projects from our Education Department, please call (607) 216-0021 or e-mail education@ppsfl.org.

WHY I VOLUNTEER FOR RCST

by Kelly Perine

I have been in the victim service field for about a dozen years and a Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier (RCST) volunteer for over 4 years. I chose to volunteer for RCST because I feel a strong need to help victims through some of the worst times of their lives by offering support and information.

I continue to volunteer because RCST has shown its volunteers how much they are appreciated and needed. When I answer a hotline call or do a medical/legal accompaniment, I know that a victim is not having to face things feeling totally alone.

The rewards that I receive as a volunteer are intangible, but give me much more satisfaction than I could receive any other way. I have a job that I enjoy and a fulfilling family life, but being a RCST volunteer is a choice that I am very proud to have made. It may not be the right choice for everyone, but the rewards are overwhelming for those who choose it.

BECOME A RAPE CRISIS VOLUNTEER

The volunteers at Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier provide over 13,000 hours of service each year to victims in Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties. Without volunteers, the lifeline of our program, we could not operate a 24-hour service.

Volunteers become certified as rape crisis counselors/advocates through the New York State Department of Health by attending a 30-hour training program that is provided by RCST staff. Certified volunteers cover after-hour shifts, as well as weekends and holidays, by staffing the 24-hour toll-free hotline, meeting clients to serve as their medical accompaniments to local hospitals for forensic exams and legal accompaniments to local law enforcement agencies and courts.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering for Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier, training is provided in the spring and fall. Contact Community Affairs Coordinator Kira Johnson at 1-888-810-0093 to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

WHY I SUPPORT PLANNED PARENTHOOD

by *Nina Miller*

Many years ago I had the privilege of serving as interim director of what was then Planned Parenthood of Tompkins County. I arrived at the doorstep of the friendly house on State Street with a life-long belief in individual freedom, including responsible and informed choices about our reproductive behavior.

The months I sat in the director's chair provided me with an "up close and personal" view of the agency. I had always believed in the work of Planned Parenthood; in fact, I had been on the founding board many years before. But the times I spent working alongside that staff of

caring and capable people reinforced my commitment many times over.

I saw the complex needs of Planned Parenthood's many clients: women seeking gynecological care, women of all ages concerned about the most effective and appropriate methods of contraception, people with concerns about sexually transmitted diseases, male and female teenagers seeking information about sexuality, women who, after objective counseling, determined that an abortion was the best and safest choice for them. And responding to those needs was a staff dedicated to providing the most professional and humane care possible, whether medical, psychosocial, or educational.

Many of the people using Planned Parenthood's services had limited financial resources, and balancing our spartan budget was immensely difficult. That situation has not changed. I deeply understand how crucial community support is to Planned Parenthood, and I am happy to be one of the thousands of people who contribute resources to make its vital services available to all who need them.

Nina Miller once served as Interim Director of Planned Parenthood of Tompkins County. She has a long and highly respected history as a volunteer and leader in social services in Tompkins County.



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