

public affairs update

President Obama Repeals Global Gag Rule

On January 23rd, following the 36th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, President Barack Obama took steps to make women's health a priority once again by signing an executive order overturning the Global Gag Rule which restricted U.S. funding for family planning services for organizations providing abortion services, and by doing so denied life-saving services to women across the world, including prevention programs in some of the poorest countries. Enacted during the Reagan administration, the rule was immediately overturned by President Clinton upon taking office, only to be reinstated by President George W. Bush.

With the overturning of the Global Gag Rule, millions more women around the world will be able to gain access to critical basic services including safe abortion and birth control since thousands of health care providers that offer the full range of reproductive health care will once again be able to inform women of all of their options, while others will be now be eligible for international family planning funding.

"Planned Parenthood thanks President Obama for taking immediate action on this critical healthcare issue, and for sending a strong, clear message about the new administration's commitment to reproductive-rights issues, both here and overseas," says Dayle Steinberg, President & CEO of Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania. "It is finally a new day for women's health."

February 2009

www.ppsp.org

Upcoming Events: Mark your Calendars!

- Volunteer Night: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
February 18th - 5:00-7:30pm
- Cocktails for a Cause: Dos Segundos in Northern Liberties
February 18th, 4:00-8:00
- Public Affairs Training: 1144 Locust Street, Philadelphia
February 28th - 10:00am-4:00pm

To RSVP or for more information about these or other PPSP events, contact the External Affairs Department at: 215.351.5585 or by email at: externalaffairs@ppsp.org

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Southeastern Pennsylvania

public affairs update cont.

Planned Parenthood Sues Over HHS Rule

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and Planned Parenthood of Connecticut filed a lawsuit on January 15th in the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut asking the court to invalidate the administrative regulation finalized in December by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The midnight regulation, issued by the outgoing Bush administration, poses a serious threat to women's health care by limiting the rights of patients to receive complete and accurate health information and services.

"We filed this lawsuit today on behalf of the millions of women whose health care has been put in jeopardy by the Bush administration's parting shot at women's health. As a critical provider of health care information and services for women, Planned Parenthood cannot simply stand back and let this harmful regulation go into effect," said PPFA President Cecile Richards.

The complaint charges that the final regulation goes far beyond the intent of Congress when it enacted the laws in question. The regulation is in conflict with other existing laws and regulations. In addition, in its rush to finalize the regulation, HHS failed to follow the appropriate regulatory steps, including failing to respond adequately to the many comments that raised significant problems with the regulation.

Also, the Connecticut attorney general, joined by the attorneys general of California, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon, and Rhode Island filed a separate but parallel legal action challenging the regulation. These states have taken proactive steps in enacting legislation that protects patients' access to vital health care services and information — for example, laws that guarantee rape survivors have access to emergency contraception in emergency rooms. The HHS regulation poses a serious barrier to the states' enforcement of their laws protecting patients.

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