

public affairs update

International Women's Day

March 8th is International Women's Day - a time to reflect on the status of women around the world. Unfortunately, for many women, the situation is not good. Women are disproportionately affected by HIV and AIDS; women account for 70% of people living in absolute poverty; more than 200 million women cannot access a modern family planning method; and every minute of every day, a woman dies from a pregnancy-related cause.

Ensuring women access to reproductive health care can help each of these problems. Unfortunately, policies here in the U.S. are harming women worldwide. The global gag rule, reinstated by President Bush on his first day in office, is a good example. Under the global gag rule, organizations that receive U.S. family planning assistance cannot provide, counsel, or refer for abortion services, nor can they advocate for abortion legalization in their own countries, even if they do so with their own private funding!

Federal legislation has been recently introduced to end this dangerous policy. The Global Democracy Promotion Act repeals the global gag rule and ensures that U.S. foreign policy promotes the health and well being of women and their families. Please contact your legislator, and urge him or her to support this bill, in honor of International Women's Day, and in honor of all women, everywhere. Contact the Public Affairs Department at publicaffairs@ppsp.org or (215) 351-5510.

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Deficit Reduction Act & Planned Parenthood

The Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005, which became law this February, includes several significant changes to Medicaid, the program that partners with states to provide health coverage to over 39 million people in low-income families. The DRA includes a provision that is having a devastating impact on 25% of Planned Parenthood's affiliates.

Planned Parenthood's longstanding ability to purchase contraceptives at discounted prices is in serious jeopardy. The provision sought to insure that only charitable organizations receive discounted (or nominal) pricing on contraceptives; however, it defined charitable organizations as those that received Title X funding.

PPSP's clinics are safe, because we receive Title X funding, and therefore we're protected. However, Planned Parenthood has 860 centers in the U.S. and 232 of them are not Title X. PPFA is working with Congress to remedy what we believe was an unintentional outcome of the provision.

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 **Planned Parenthood**[®]
Southeastern Pennsylvania

public affairs update, cont.

Women's History Month

In March, we recognize Women's History Month, International Women's Day and Back Up Your Birth Control Week.

"No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body," wrote Margaret Sanger in 1920.

In the 20th century, the right to choose when and whether to have children became a cornerstone of women's efforts to achieve social, political, and economic equality and freedom. Margaret Sanger gained worldwide renown, respect, and admiration for founding the American birth control movement and, later, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, as well as for developing and encouraging family planning efforts throughout the international community.

Her work centered on the principles that a woman's right to control her body is the foundation of her human rights; that every person should be able to decide when or whether to have a child; that every child should be wanted and loved; and that women are entitled to sexual pleasure and fulfillment.

The last three decades have seen countless attacks on women's reproductive rights, but the pro-choice majority remains strong. In the face of this anti-choice extremism, Planned Parenthood continues to work hard so that future generations of women will have the same fundamental right enjoyed by their 20th-century ancestors: the right to choose when and whether to have children.

Upcoming Events: Mark your Calendars!

- Back Up Your Birth Control Week
March 19th - 24th
- Cocktails for a Cause
Tuesday, March 20th - 5:00-8:00pm
Crescent City: 900 South Street / Philadelphia
- Volunteer Night at PPSP, 1144 Locust Street
Wednesday, March 21st - 5:00-7:30pm

To RSVP or for information about these or other PPSP events, contact the Public Affairs Department at publicaffairs@ppsp.org or (215) 351-5585.