

our words our work

NEWSLETTER

Planned Parenthood®
of Western New York

SPRING 2009

1 in 4 Americans Has an STD

planned parenthood and MTV team up for “get yourself tested ‘09”

In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released shocking data about the spread and prevalence of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases/infections) in populations under the age of 25. Overall, 1 in 4 Americans has an STD and almost half of all STDs occur in 15-24 year olds. In response to these statistics, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the Kaiser Family Foundation and MTV networks have joined forces to encourage young people to get tested.

“Get Yourself Tested ‘09” is a month long advertising and “social marketing” campaign during April 2009 which connects the major media outlets of the MTV family, the web presences of the Kaiser Family Foundation and Planned Parenthood, plus the health care services of organizations such as Planned Parenthood’s local affiliates. Planned Parenthood’s involvement in the campaign is anchored by two goals: one, to connect young people to needed services at a price they can afford; and two, to introduce Planned Parenthood as a trusted health care provider to a new generation of young people.

Locally, Planned Parenthood of Western New York intends to reach out across the local airwaves via radio, use web-based outreach on social networking sites, and advertise on internet locations such as Google, the most popular internet search engine.

“We plan to test 200 to 350 new clients in April. Four of our health centers, North Tonawanda, Buffalo, West Seneca and Niagara Falls will offer walk-up testing for just \$35. Many individuals will qualify for free testing if their income falls at 200% of the federal poverty level or below,” said Karen J. Nelson, Chief Executive Officer of Planned Parenthood of Western New York. “We will also be giving free emergency contraception to all women who participate in the STD testing program, to help spread the word about this misunderstood, but effective, method of preventing pregnancy after sex.”

The Buffalo Niagara area is above the state-wide rates of infection for many STDs. Chlamydia rates are about 6.7% higher in the local region when compared to the rest of New York. For gonorrhea, the local rate is about 120% higher than the state-wide rate. In fact, the Buffalo Niagara community has seen an increase in the rate of occurrence for gonorrhea and chlamydia. From 2003 to 2007, local gonorrhea rates have increased 29% and chlamydia rates have increased 47%.

“The occurrence of STDs in our client population at Planned Parenthood reflects an upward trend similar to what we see in the general population. However, our clients are more likely to test positive for an STD due to their age and their risk factors, such as lack of health care information or a steady relationship with a health care provider,” says Colleen Schiffhauer, WHNP and Director of Patient Services for Planned Parenthood of Western New York. “Our providers spend a tremendous amount of energy and time talking to patients about STDs. Clients do not know that untreated chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause infertility and can be passed on to an infant during the childbirth process. Part of our efforts to reduce STDs is to protect the future childbearing ability of our clients. They may or may not want children at this time in their lives, but untreated STDs can affect their health long-term.”

this issue

- new york state budget cuts = local pain 2
- president obama's first month in office 2
- spring into celebration 3



our mission

Planned Parenthood of Western New York provides reproductive and family health care, promotes responsible and healthy sexuality, and protects choice.



photo by cherylgorski.com

President Obama's First Month in Office

agenda includes expansion of family planning & repeal of global gag

Karen J. Nelson, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Western New York, joined colleagues across the country on January 23, 2009 in applauding President Barack Obama on overturning what is commonly called the "Global Gag Rule," saying, "Our strong accolades to the new President! Overturning the global gag rule means the toxic rhetoric of the anti-abortion movement no longer dictates health care policy for organizations that need to access US funding for global health."

International family planning programs, including education and services, were dealt a significant blow eight years ago when this dangerous gag rule was put in place by former president George W. Bush. This rule denied funding to international health agencies that provided all-options counseling for women or advocated for expanded reproductive rights.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America's President, Cecile Richards said, "With the stroke of a pen, President Obama has lifted the stranglehold on women's health across the globe. Planned Parenthood thanks President Obama for taking immediate action on this critical health issue. Just a few days after he's taken office, we can clearly say thanks to President Obama; it truly is a new day for women's health."

Additionally, in his first federal budget, released on February 26, President Obama included several items with positive impacts on public health including: expansion of the Medicaid family planning waiver (something New York State, and many other states, already have in place but a program that should be implemented across the country); a promise to use evidence based models when it comes to sex education; increased investment in global health programs, including in areas such as maternal and child health, family planning and other core health programs; and commitments to new resources to "enhance HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment."

New York State Budget Cuts = Local Pain



▲ Karen J. Nelson,
Chief Executive Officer

2008 was a difficult economic year for everyone; Planned Parenthood of Western New York faced similar difficulties. In summer 2008, the New York State Legislature informed family planning providers to expect a 6% cut to current grant programs and extended the same cut to Community Based Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (CBAPP) program funds. The cut was applied "across the board" to programs already in place for the grant year. In actuality the cut amounted to \$75,430 for 2008 grant year programs.

For the 2009 grant year, the cuts are even more severe. Family planning state funds received a 6% reduction totaling \$124,352 and CBAPP funding for comprehensive sex education were cut \$151,899. Additionally, but related to the state's woes, Erie County has placed "on-hold" an \$18,000 grant to Planned Parenthood for 2009 after school health education programs.

The impact of these cuts is being felt. Planned Parenthood continues to provide high-quality services to a growing population of clients, most unable to pay. But, less money is now available to offset the costs of serving these individuals. In October 2008, reproductive health services were suspended at the Planned Parenthood center in Lockport, which served 500 clients. (These clients were given the option to continue care at the Niagara Falls or the North Tonawanda site and re-opening the site is evaluated each quarter.)

"At a time when more and more people are losing their health insurance due to job loss," Karen J. Nelson, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Western New York said, "Cuts to safety-net providers like Planned Parenthood hurt community health. We are a first-class steward of public funding for healthcare and preventive health education. Our mission is to serve those who need care the most, but every cut makes that harder and harder to do."

Family Planning is cost-effective. In 2008, research by the Guttmacher Institute proved this fact. For every \$1 in public funds spent for family planning, the public saves \$4.03 in Medicaid and related health costs. Nonetheless, the cost of doing business is also increasing. Flat funding for family planning at the federal level has actually meant less funding for essential health care for low-income women and men. Both advances in contraceptive technologies and offering all birth control options cause increased costs for Planned Parenthood.

"Cutting family planning is a short term fix that creates a long-term problem," continued Nelson. "There are enormous savings that come to the community when we can prevent the complications of untreated STIs/STDs, or from the early detection of breast and cervical cancer. When women are able to plan and space pregnancies, health outcomes are better and costs are lower. New York's statewide view of health care is transitioning to preventive, patient-centered care. Family planning health centers provide a model for the type of care that is rooted in prevention."

What can you do?

- Sign up for email action alerts at www.plannedparenthoodaction.org
- Use your email account to get the latest updates about what's happening in Washington, DC and Albany, NY.
- Help Planned Parenthood be the voice for family planning, sex education and health services for the underserved in Western New York.

Spring into Celebration!

annual fundraising event honors WNY champions
for planned parenthood

celebrate *with* friends

On Wednesday, May 13th Planned Parenthood of Western New York will host “Celebrate with Friends,” an annual evening event featuring Buffalo native, award winning actor, and national Planned Parenthood advocate, Wendie Malick.*



The evening program chaired by Millie Toy, will also recognize three Western New Yorkers for their outstanding efforts to promote the mission of Planned Parenthood:

THE 2009 WILLIAM B. HOYT ADVOCACY FOR CHOICE AWARD

Kristen M. Grandinetti
*Elementary Teacher NFCSD,
Community Activist/Volunteer*

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF WESTERN NEW YORK 2009 EDUCATION AWARD

Stephanie Wright
*Human Sexuality Educator,
Chautauqua County Department of Health*

PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF WESTERN NEW YORK 2009 HEALTH AWARD

Virginia C. Oehler
*Program Advisor,
Community Health Foundation of Western & Central New York*

The event will be held in the Mary Seaton Room at Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo with an anticipated 350 guests in attendance. Doors open at 5:30 pm with a ticket auction followed by a sit-down dinner and program to begin at 6:45pm. Tickets are \$75 and \$125 and can be purchased by calling (716) 831-2200, option #4 or online at ppwny.org.

*Scheduled to appear at time of print.

United Way Recinds Funding Restriction

out-dated policy lifted

More than 2 years after Planned Parenthood of Western New York was made aware of the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County's restriction on funding for agencies that provide abortion services, the United Way's Board of Directors announced a policy change.

According to recent articles in *The Buffalo News* and *Buffalo Business First*, the United Way determined its decades-old policy, composed of 13 “position statements,” were no longer necessary.

“I was delighted to receive this information and look forward to more discussions with staff and Board at the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County,” commented Karen J. Nelson, CEO of Planned Parenthood of Western New York.

Pro-choice supporters throughout the community expressed concern when, in 2007, the United Way denied funding to Planned Parenthood of Western New York for merger-related expenses. At that time in a letter to the editor to *The Buffalo News*, then President, Arlene Kaukus, stated, “For more than 25 years, the United Way has been guided by a position statement that no discretionary (Community Care) funds will be allocated to fund abortion programs or providers of abortion services.” (*September 20, 2007*)

Nelson's recent conversations with United Way leadership focused on funding priorities and methods. “I was told that the United Way's new funding process will now be ‘open and focused and blind.’ I can only applaud a sentiment such as this. Planned Parenthood believes donor transparency is key for every organization that is a steward of the public's financial support. The community is better when trusted and respected not-for-profit agencies work together for the greater good,” continued Nelson.

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“Why I Support Planned Parenthood”

Mrs. Priscilla “Peg” Addoms

“I support Planned Parenthood because they are literally saving women’s lives. Women should be able to make choices that save their lives and control their future. The work that Planned Parenthood does allows women to have the life that they want, when they want it.”

– Mrs. Priscilla “Peg” Addoms, *Legacy of Choice Society* Member, *Promise for Tomorrow Society* Member, Foundation Board Member, Development Committee Member & Former Board Member

