

## **OP-ED**

### **Get to Know Planned Parenthood**

Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest will be opening a new health center this spring to serve the Imperial Valley. For over 50 years, the organization has earned its reputation as a trusted health care provider by providing quality, accurate, nonjudgmental reproductive health care for generations of women and men.

Each year, we provide over 200,000 cancer screenings, birth control visits, and disease screenings at our 19 health centers in San Diego and Riverside Counties. Our comprehensive education programs educate 45,000 women, men and youth through schools, community-based organizations, and faith-based programs.

More than 95% of what we do is preventive health care including lifesaving cancer screenings, birth control, testing and treatment of STDs, breast health services, sexual health education, and health counseling. We work every day to make sure that our patients receive the quality health care they need in a safe and respectful environment.

The teen birth rate in Imperial County is the fifth highest in California—70% higher than the state average. Together with the community, there is so much opportunity to provide education, knowledge, and access to high-quality reproductive health care for those that seek these services.

I know that abortion is a deeply personal subject and acknowledge the differing opinions on the issue. The reality is that no organization does more than Planned Parenthood to prevent the need for abortion through our highly affordable and accessible contraception and education services. Providing safe and legal abortion is a small yet important part of what we do. Decisions about whether to choose adoption, end a pregnancy or continue a pregnancy must be made by a woman in consultation with her health care provider, her family and her faith.

At Planned Parenthood, our patient-centered medical care includes a full range of reproductive health services that help men and women plan their families and their lives. We are committed to providing high-quality health care to the community.

*Darrah DiGiorgio Johnson is President & CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Pacific Southwest*