

The Public Affairs Pulse

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PPWNM Urges Women Under 40 to Take Control of Breast Health

Planned Parenthood of West and Northern Michigan (PPWNM) encouraged women under 40 to take control of their breast health during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. PPWNM spoke with several media outlets, and promoted breast health awareness on its website and social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube).

"Early detection saves lives," said Vice President of Medical Services Bridget White, "Women under 40 too often aren't aware of their own breast health, dismiss a lump as something that doesn't need attention, or are paralyzed by fear. Waiting can change the course of a woman's life, and that's why Planned Parenthood is urging women to see their health care professional if they notice a change in their breasts."

Planned Parenthood doctors and nurses play a unique role in delivering health care to young women, as 94 percent of Planned Parenthood patients across the country are under the age of 40. Planned Parenthood health care professionals help young women understand the screening that's best for them as well as the factors that can reduce their breast cancer risk — including getting regular exercise and limiting alcohol intake.

One in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. Though women under 40 make up less than 10 percent of the

total percentage of women diagnosed with breast cancer every year, when cancer does occur in younger women, it is often aggressive.

Clinical breast exams are the first line of defense for providers in detecting breast cancer in most young women. Last year, PPWNM medical professionals provided more than 12,000 breast exams. Like most ob/gyns and primary care physicians, if a Planned Parenthood health care provider finds an abnormality during an exam, the patient is referred to a breast specialist for further examination, which may include diagnostic tests, like an ultrasound or biopsy.

To schedule an appointment for an annual exam, which includes breast and cervical cancer screenings, go to ppwnm.org/healthcenters to find the health center nearest you.

Teens Promote Safe Sex at Local College

Teens with the PPWNM Something to Say (STS) program did a condom drop at Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) on October 16. The group's focus was promoting safe sex and the need for comprehensive sexuality education.



The participants were greeted by a wonderfully warm day as well as multiple smiling faces as students at GRCC were cycling through campus. STS members canvassed the grounds and offered packets of free condoms that also included information about services offered by Planned Parenthood, the importance of getting tested for STDs, and the need for "real" sex education in our communities.

Many people were happy to accept the packages and many even asked for more information about services, education and awareness. The need for accurate information and quality medical services was expressed by most recipients and on multiple occasions STS participants were thanked and encouraged by those they interacted with on campus.

Upcoming Events

World AIDS Day program in Grand Rapids. Fountain St. Church, Saturday, December 1, 6:30 p.m. PPWNM will host informational table at social gathering following the program.



If you are interested in volunteering with Planned Parenthood, please e-mail publicaffairs@ppwnm.org.

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