



News Update

Planned Parenthood Association of the Mercer Area, Inc.

Spring 2012



*"At this moment in which politics seems to be increasingly used to limit access to sex education for young people and reproductive health for women, I believe that there is a huge opportunity on the horizon, and that is through technology."
—Cecile Richards*

Planned Parenthood Federation President Cecile Richards, who spoke at Princeton University on March 28, with PPAMA VOX volunteers

PLANNED PARENTHOOD LEADER IN PRINCETON

Cecile Richards—the head of Planned Parenthood Federation of America—spoke to students and Planned Parenthood supporters, staff, and board members at The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University on March 28th. She opened her remarks by outlining a variety of egregious pieces of legislation which are currently wending their way through state legislatures, none of which are medically necessary, most of which are simply designed to increase barriers to women seeking the full range of reproductive health care options.

Richards — who called herself “an optimist” — was also hopeful and spent a majority of her remarks looking toward a future where stigma around accessing reproductive health care is no longer prevalent. She was particularly enthusiastic when discussing the power of technology to connect people and create social change. Planned Parenthood has always placed a priority on access to accurate information, and significant advances in technology make that priority

even more of a reality. Richards spoke of a “revolution” in how people access information on their computers, on their phones—and how Planned Parenthood is capitalizing on this revolution to ensure access to the most accurate, honest reproductive health care information possible.

It was also hard not to notice the energy of the students in the room, who asked Richards a broad array of questions, from the role of sex positivity in advocating for women’s health to advice on how to talk about reproductive health to peers.

Richards also encouraged the women’s health advocates in the lecture hall to stay strong and active in the face of repeated attacks. As our Planned Parenthood health centers in New Jersey face a third year without state family planning dollars, this encouragement was appreciated. Because, at the end of the day, after the political noise has died down, our work is all about serving patients and their basic health care needs.

www.plannedparenthood.org/mercer

MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CEO



DEBBY D'ARCANGELO
Interim CEO

It has been a little longer than six months since I started as Interim CEO at Planned Parenthood Association of the Mercer Area (PPAMA) and what a six months it has been!

There has been a palpable shift in the sense of support from the public during these months as anti-women's health forces have tried to roll

back reproductive health rights and, quite specifically, attacked Planned Parenthood. Our supporters will have none of that and have come to our defense – making phone calls, posting on social networking websites, and writing checks to us to demonstrate that they stand with Planned Parenthood.

This broad support was really evident on April 27th at our annual [Spring Benefit luncheon](#). It was a great success, with sell-out attendance of 600 supporters and an inspiring talk by professor, author and television host Melissa Harris-Perry. It was also a treat to award the PPAMA [2012 Margaret Sanger Circle Award](#) to a dedicated volunteer for us for many years. Everyone who worked on the Spring Benefit deserves great thanks and congratulations!

This newsletter includes two items that were also in the Spring Benefit program: the [Elevator Speech](#) and the case for our “One More Day” fundraising initiative. As I said at the Spring Benefit, we need our supporters to use elements of the Elevator Speech when talking

to people who don't know much about Planned Parenthood, or who may have been influenced by those giving misinformation about us. In addition, the back page of this newsletter explains our [“One More Day” initiative](#). As a result of state budget cuts of all family planning funds two years ago, we are raising funds so that we can provide more appointments to women in Trenton who need our full range of reproductive health services. Support that you provide to this initiative, over and above your regular annual gift (which we already need!), will be put to good use and greatly appreciated.

In addition to challenges presented by anti-reproductive health forces, we at Planned Parenthood are working on various aspects of Health Care Reform, many of which will move forward regardless of decisions by the Supreme Court in June or the electorate in November. While we know that increased insurance coverage will help so many people in our community, we are working hard to position ourselves well in what may be a very different health care landscape. There's some information provided in the article on [Electronic Health Records](#), and we look forward to keeping you up-to-date on our overall progress on Health Care Reform as it evolves.

Finally, I must say that it is my great pleasure to be in this role with Planned Parenthood Mercer because of our very strong staff and Board. We will continue to work hard to ensure that the people of greater Mercer County receive the high-quality reproductive health care they need and deserve—and we greatly appreciate your support of our efforts to do so.

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CONSCIOUS SEDATION

Women have been depending on PPAMA since 1994 for in-clinic abortions. Thanks to the generous support from our Capital Campaign donors, in January 2012 Planned Parenthood introduced conscious sedation services as an option to clients receiving in-clinic abortions at our Trenton health center. Conscious or “moderate” sedation, administered intravenously immediately prior to the procedure, provides women with medications that alleviate pain and anxiety during the procedure. (It is commonly used for colonoscopies and other procedures as well.) Clients who choose this option are required to have someone drive them home and must limit food intake prior to the procedure.

We are proud to add this additional pain option as part of the continuum of abortion care at Planned Parenthood. Given the number of women who are selecting conscious sedation, it is clear that the addition of this anesthesia option is well received by our clients and community. We are thrilled to be able to offer conscious sedation and look forward to continuing to provide high quality, confidential abortion care to our clients.

PPAMA BEGINS THE EXCITING JOURNEY TO ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS

PPAMA is currently focusing its efforts on moving to electronic health records (EHR) by 2014 as required by the Affordable Care Act. An EHR is a computerized version of a patient’s health record and health information that can be easily shared by doctors and health care organizations. Phase 1 of this process, completed in February 2012, involved moving to a patient data management system that supports medical records. The second phase of the process, moving to EHR, is scheduled to take place in early 2013. Electronic health records will offer a more effective and efficient way to provide patient care. Some of the many benefits will include: being able to quantify patients’ needs and look at trends; assure that clinicians have medical record information at their fingertips; and faster receipt of lab results.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD: THE ELEVATOR SPEECH

The elevator speech is a short summary used to quickly and simply define an organization. It reflects the idea that it should be possible to deliver this summary in the time span of an elevator ride, or approximately thirty seconds to two minutes. This tool is particularly important for supporters of Planned Parenthood, as those opposed to our core values of reproductive health and freedom all too often misrepresent our work, mission, and values. We hope that you will find the following elevator speech helpful in your advocacy work for Planned Parenthood.

PLANNED PARENTHOOD believes in the fundamental right of each individual to manage his/her own sexuality and fertility.

You can rely on Planned Parenthood for a wide range of preventive health services. More than 90% of what we do at our three health centers in Mercer County (Trenton, Hamilton, and at The College of New Jersey) is life-saving cancer screenings, birth control, prevention and treatment of STDs, vasectomies, health counseling, and sexual health education and information. In 2011, we helped more than 12,000 people in our community with our comprehensive reproductive health care services and education/outreach programs.

And the general public supports our work, too. National polls show majority support for Planned Parenthood; a majority also opposes cutting off federal funding to Planned Parenthood.

Nationally, 1 in 5 women have turned to us at some time in their lives for professional, non-judgmental, and confidential care. We’ve earned this confidence as a nonprofit organization in Trenton for almost 80 years.

WE NEED ONE MORE DAY

Help us keep our doors open so we can provide essential health care for women in Trenton.

In 2010 we were open 5 1/2 days a week and served more than 4,150 women in Trenton by providing 7,170 appointment visits. (Many of our patients, like Anna, require critical follow-up visits.)

With the 2011 budget cuts and the complete elimination of family planning from the New Jersey state budget, we are now only open 3 1/2 days a week, serving 3,400 women in Trenton through 5,500 appointment visits.

The state budget cuts forced us to reduce available appointments by 23%. This is a travesty.

PPAMA seeks contributions, separate from annual gifts, to the "One More Day" initiative. If you can help, please contact the Development Office at 609.964.7954 or e-mail events@ppmercer.org.

51-year-old Anna hasn't had a comprehensive medical exam in years. All she knows is that she is having abdominal pain and bleeding and needs our immediate help. She comes to the Health Center seeking treatment and only has enough money for this one visit. After receiving care for her presenting problem, she is ready to leave promising that she will be back for a full visit when she has enough money. Fortunately, before she does leave, our doctor insists that she have a full exam while she is there. He finds a lump in her right breast that turns out to be cancerous. He takes immediate steps and Anna's life is saved.

There are many more women like Anna in Trenton who need our help; women who don't have money for preventative health care. And because of the state budget cuts, their access to care is jeopardized.

We know that there are more than 750 women who used to be our patients who can no longer access care at Planned Parenthood due to the drastic cut in services and appointment hours—a result of the loss of \$350,000 in annual operating funds previously provided by the state.

On a daily basis virtually all of our family planning appointments are filled, often by nine in the morning. A patient will call back the next day only to learn the appointments are filled and she must call back yet again the next day. Days turn into weeks, and weeks turn into months.

There is a women's health care crisis in Trenton!

Here's the frightening thing: There may be no place else in Trenton for these women in need to go. Planned Parenthood, considered the premier provider of comprehensive reproductive health care for this community, is currently one of the very few gynecological health care practitioners for the uninsured in Trenton.

Family planning delayed is family planning denied.

Trying to get an appointment for an IUD form of birth control, Gloria called our office three days in a row. Each time, we were unable to see her for a family planning visit because there were simply no available appointments. Sadly, when she finally called back, she needed to make an appointment for an abortion.

We need to act now so that we can reopen our clinic doors one more day per week and give the women we serve access to reproductive health care today and tomorrow.

To make this happen, we must raise an additional \$600,000 for operating funds over the next two years:

\$200,000 of these funds will pay for one more day per week for family planning appointments in 2012.

\$200,000 will pay for one more day per week for family planning appointments in 2013.

\$200,000 will replenish the Health Care Fund for use in 2013.

The Health Care Fund, established as part of our Capital Campaign to ensure that the women in Trenton continue to have access to affordable health care, is needed more than ever in the wake of government funding cuts. Our goal is to raise \$200,000 to replenish this fund, which will be depleted as scheduled by 2012, in order to subsidize the cost of family planning and life-saving preventative health services to our patients in 2013.

While our funding may change dramatically with Health Care Reform implementation in 2014, we seek this \$600,000 in operating support for the next two years to meet the essential health care needs of the thousands of women in Trenton like Anna and Gloria who still need our help.

State and Federal family planning funding has never been used for abortions; on the contrary, it has helped prevent them.

Planned Parenthood...We're here because of you.