



FOCUS

ON PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Planned Parenthood of Western Washington

Fall 2008

Breaking Down the Barriers to Health Care

When does a dollar become a hammer? The answer to that question can be found among the many Washington state residents who generously designate their contributions to Planned Parenthood of Western Washington (PPWW) every fall. This time of year, workplace campaigns are being launched all over our region, and thousands of great charitable organizations depend on the money raised to keep their lights burning, their doors open, and their services coming.

But the hard working Washingtonians who designate their gifts to Planned Parenthood of Western Washington

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The Urge to Merge

The headline may suggest this is an article about sex education. In fact, we are pleased, proud, and excited to announce a history-making consolidation, with Planned Parenthood of Western Washington at the forefront.

For the last year, three regional affiliates of Planned Parenthood have had discussions and conducted feasibility studies to explore the pros and cons of merging operations. The pros won. As of January 1st, 2009, Planned Parenthood of Idaho, Planned Parenthood of Alaska, and Planned Parenthood of Western Washington will become one of the largest single affiliates in the United States. The official new name of the affiliate is still to be decided.

So the next logical question you may have is “why merge?” When boiled down to the simplest explanation, it’s the best way of providing access to reproductive services for those who need it most.

But to expand further, there are several reasons that a merger with these two other affiliates makes sense. First, the economic challenges many not-for-profit agencies have been feeling in recent years, due to new restrictive government

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Choose a better date,
choose a better dress,
choose to have a choice.

The Pro-Choice Prom

October 18
8pm to Midnight

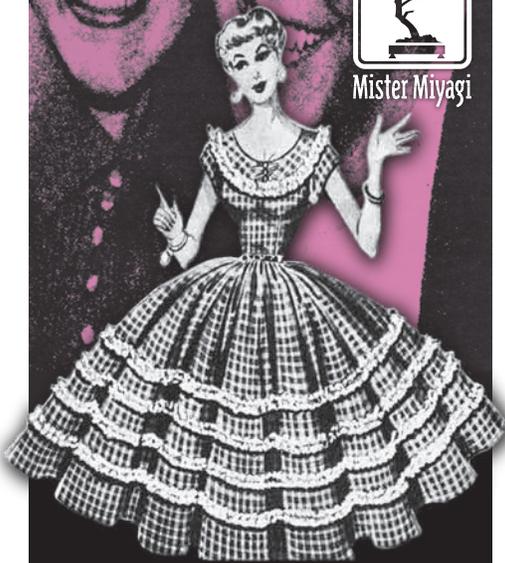
Garfield
Community
Center

2323 E. Cherry St., Seattle

Music by



Mister Miyagi



Pre-sale tickets:

\$17 individual / \$26 couple.

At the door:

\$20 individual / \$30 couple.

Each person gets 2 drinks
with their ticket.

 **Planned Parenthood**
of Western Washington

Buy tickets online:

[www.plannedparenthood.org/
westernwashington/
pro-choice-prom-22212.htm](http://www.plannedparenthood.org/westernwashington/pro-choice-prom-22212.htm)

Executive Update



The Choice This Fall

Elections are always important, but I'm hard pressed to remember when another election had so much at stake. This year's choices represent stark contrasts. Not just where it comes to reproductive rights, but on many other levels, Americans face a true distinction between the candidates this fall, and that's true for national as well as our local races.

So just what is at stake this November? *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that guarantees a woman's right to choose abortion, has existed for years based on its support by five of the nine justices on the bench. Supreme Court justices are chosen by the sitting president and confirmed by the Senate.

Justice John Paul Stevens, who usually votes in favor of abortion rights, is 88 years old. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is 75. It's highly likely the next president will have at least one Supreme Court appointment, possibly two and maybe more. The razor-thin margin of support for *Roe v. Wade* will not survive another anti-choice president. And that is a world none of us wants to imagine.

On the next page of this issue of FOCUS is a checklist of steps you can take to be effective on Election Day. Feel free to cut out the list and put it on your refrigerator. If we all pull together, we can smile on November 5th.

And speaking of pulling together, you have probably already seen the article on page one about the plans we have to merge with two other affiliates in our region. This has been in the works for



months now, but the excitement around here just seems to build.

Not-for-profit organizations around the country have been consolidating for some time now. With new regulations and reimbursement restrictions from the state and federal government, it makes sense to come together for two reasons: First, the merger means we can stream revenue where it's most needed—to medical services. The real winners here are the patients, who will have more access in underserved areas and more efficient services in areas we presently cover.

The other reason for merging is to enhance our visibility and influence with state, regional, and federal governments. We plan to open a new health center in Juneau, Alaska by late October or early November. Placing a health center in Alaska's state capital does more than just bring services to a population that needs them, it also says to politicians and residents alike, "We're here and we're not going anywhere."

The next year will be one of transition for us as we complete the merger with Idaho and Alaska. As always, we are honored by your support. And we are certain that with that support, and the talented people we have as staff and volunteers, our efforts will only improve our efficiency and multiply our accomplishments.



Christine R. Charbonneau,
President/CEO



The Devil is in the Details

HHS Rule Threatens Health Care

Your access to health care and the reproductive rights

you now have could be jeopardized by a new ruling handed down by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Many are calling this ruling a bow to social conservatives in the last months of the current administration.

Under the auspices of a “provider conscience” regulation, the ruling creates dangerous space for ideology and political views to insert themselves into medical practices, emergency rooms, and clinics all across the country. Important medical decisions, health care services, and information will suddenly be open to very personal interpretations and political agendas, and patients will suffer as a result.

When details of the document are studied, the proposed rule is recklessly vague. In the small print you will find no definition of abortion, thus any health care worker can ascribe the word “abortion” to any form of birth control, all the way from an IUD to Plan B, and anything in between. And because this is a federal rule, entire health facilities could refuse to make birth control available—regardless of state laws to the contrary.

In fact, the rule could drastically affect state laws designed to ensure contraceptive equity in insurance, access to emergency contraception for assault victims, and rules that keep pharmacists from refusing contraception to patients who walk in their door. Right now, at least 38 states have laws that could be in jeopardy as a result of this regulation.

In addition, the regulation strikes a blow to federal programs set up to provide health care to low income Americans. A case in point is the Title X family planning program, which guarantees that the millions of women accessing care through the program receive unbiased and non-directive counseling regarding all of the options regarding their pregnancy. Under the proposed rules, women can no longer be assured they will be given information for all of their health care options, including abortion.

The period for public comment ended earlier this month. You can keep up to date on this and other reproductive health issues by becoming a member of the Planned Parenthood Action Network (PPAN). Go to www.ppaction.org or call our Public Affairs department at (206) 861-7531 for more information.



Voter's Checklist

One of the most important elections in our nation's history comes your way in just a few short weeks. Voting is your civic duty, but how do you know you've done everything you can? Here's a checklist:

- **Register to vote.** It's not too late. You can register through October 3rd on the Washington Secretary of State website (www.secstate.wa.gov) or you can go in person to your county elections office and register within 15 days of the election.
- **Help register others.** Do you have 18 year-olds in your house? Make sure everyone eligible in your home is ready to go come election day.
- **Attend candidate forums.** Find out when and where discussions about issues and debates between candidates are being held. Become an informed voter.
- **Learn more about reproductive issues.** Go to www.ppww.org for a voter's guide.
- **Give your neighbors a ride to the polls.** Organize a neighborhood carpool for Election Day. While lots of people are voting by mail, many still cast their vote at their local polling place.
- **Volunteer your time.** You can help someone whose undecided make up their mind. Call our Volunteer Hotline at (206) 861-7531 or email us at publicaffairs@ppww.org.
- **Vote on November 4th.** Circle the date on your calendar. Plan an elections return party. Wear funny hats. Eat Tollhouse cookies with red, white, and blue M&Ms in them.

Technology Brings “Communities” Together

Leave it to our Information Technology department (IT) to take a daunting challenge and turn it into a series of exciting opportunities. The merging of PPWW with Alaska and Idaho means communicating between offices and health centers over thousands of miles. The solutions proposed by IT utilize leading edge technology and the latest internet web tools.

These technologies will also connect the entire three-state community which will “flatten” the organization, making consistent information available across the affiliate. Technology will also create new opportunities for connection and collaboration, such as affiliate-wide, real-time events for donors or activists around breaking news events.

As these tools have become more popular, prices for their use have dropped substantially, to the point where online meeting services and even multi-point video conferencing services are available at reasonable flat monthly fees. At the same time, escalating energy and travel costs have made it even more important to use these technologies. Today, these collaboration tools not only save money and time, but are aligned with our “green” initiative, Choices for Earth.

Other new tools being rolled out include instant messaging, which allows staff to “chat” in real-time, and customer support software which will help staff answer questions and process requests from patients.

Training will also benefit from new technology. For instance, all health center staff must be OSHA-WISHA certified every two years. In the past, training teams would have to be sent out to health centers with paper tests in hand. Recently, our training staff developed an online module that tests the employee on her or his own time. Training is developing a similar module for Idaho and Alaska, in compliance with their state laws.

The new media paradigm is letting people communicate in their own terms, in their own time, while on their own turf. It also helps standardize the processes that will keep everyone involved in the merger on the same page.

Merger *from page 1*

(Medicaid) drawbacks, mean having to make hard choices about services, and in some cases, staff. Merging with Alaska and Idaho will strengthen all three affiliates financially and mitigate any loss of services.

Another appealing aspect of the merger will be to streamline redundant duties between affiliates. Alaska and Idaho can tap into the infrastructure of PPWW, allowing community involvement at the local level by freeing staff in outlying areas. This comes as welcome news for many of our people who wear several hats at their small affiliate. Some jobs will be centralized, some jobs will be localized, but we do not anticipate jobs will be lost due to cutbacks in staff.

And finally, the merge means multiplying the political clout of Planned Parenthood in the region by three. Our Government Relations, Media Relations, Public Relations, and Public Policy teams can apply the influence of the entire three-state region.

We believe that new economic realities also mean new organizational opportunities. Alaska and Idaho are strong affiliates who have served their patients with care and professionalism. At Planned Parenthood of Western Washington, we look forward to learning from our new colleagues and applying their proven methods as we work towards the future.

Creating this new affiliate will streamline efforts, increase efficiency, and give us greater impact for advocacy. However, the biggest winners are our patients, who will benefit from better managed care and greater access in areas that have been underserved in the past. And of course none of this would be possible without your generous support.

Fun Facts

Planned Parenthood of Alaska has the daunting task of serving a state with 571,911 square miles; but whose population density accounts for only 1.1 person per square mile. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Planned Parenthood of Western Washington serves 88.6 persons per square mile in their 8 counties. Idaho State is only about 25% larger than PPWW's trade area, but their population is more than double Alaska's. Planned Parenthood of Idaho serves 15.6 persons per square mile.

Meet Our New Partners

Idaho

by Rebecca Poedy, President and CEO,
Planned Parenthood of Idaho

Planned Parenthood of Idaho

(PPI) has been an affiliate with the Federation since 1971. We have two health centers and serve about 10,000 unduplicated patients every year in 35 counties below the panhandle. The state of Idaho is about 25% larger than PPWW's trade area, but our population is more than double Alaska's. We serve 15.6 persons per square mile.

If I had to describe the 30 full time and part employees of PPI with one word it would be "indomitable." The state of Idaho does not allow Planned Parenthood to have any state or federal aid used for family planning. The citizens of Idaho, and those of us who are trying to provide family planning services, are on our own. Only ten of the 35 state Senators are pro-choice.

In the House, we can only count on 15 votes in a body of 75 Representatives. We live in a beautiful state full of natural wonders, but the environment for the reproductive rights movement is nothing short of hostile.

Since 2003, the citizens of Idaho have had to pay for every dime of their reproductive health care, and the people who work in the administrative office and health centers have worked tirelessly to assist patients with sliding fee scales and other creative payment arrangements.

We look forward to working with our new colleagues in Alaska and Western Washington. We're excited at the prospect of creating more access to reproductive health care services for our state and everywhere else we can within our region.

Alaska

by Clover Simon, CEO,
Planned Parenthood of Alaska

Hello and greetings from the non-contiguous 49th state! Planned Parenthood of Alaska (PPA) is a \$2.6 million, single affiliate agency serving 570,374 square miles via four, soon to be five, health centers. PPA has six educators across the state and an administrative team of seven.

As a large, geographically, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse state, Alaska offers an array of challenges and rewards. With a state population of just over 650,000, Alaska is an exciting market for targeted health services, advertising, education, and electoral activity.

PPA was formed in a church basement in Anchorage in 1966 as the Anchorage Planned Parenthood League. In just over 40 years Alaskans have helped PPA initiate and expand services in Soldotna



(Kenai Peninsula – South Central Alaska), Sitka (an island – Southeast Alaska), Fairbanks (the heart of Alaska – Central Alaska), and Anchorage (Alaska's largest city with about 350,000 – South Central Alaska).

The State of Alaska does not provide state funding for family planning services to PPA and funds limited services through public health. Most of our clients rely on PPA for all their health care needs. All of our sites offer limited family practice as well as reproductive health services. Sitka and Soldotna receive Title X funding and Fairbanks and Anchorage do not.

Abortion services are offered at our Anchorage and Fairbanks sites. PPA's 5th health center is planned to open in the fall of 2008 in Juneau and will provide abortion services.

Our save-the-world staff of seven full-time admin, educators and twenty-seven clinicians/clinic managers/CMAs look forward to working through a fluid and flexible merger with Idaho and Western Washington.





Cecile Richards on Local Radio

Politics filled the airwaves

as Cecile Richards, President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, took time out of her busy schedule on September 9th to appear on KUOW's Weekday program hosted by Steve Scher. The two discussed Cecile Richards' mother, the late Anne Richards, former governor of Texas.

Also on the agenda was today's politics. With the general election just a month away, it's important that people know where the candidates stand on reproductive rights issues. The hour-long segment prompted many calls to the station. To hear an archive of the show, follow this link to KUOW's website where you can download the program to your computer: www.kuow.org/program.php?id=15767

Profile of a Clinician

I have 15 minutes to get this interview. She walks into the staff lunch room precisely at our appointed time. She takes off her white lab coat and hangs it on the chair. She sits down with a small salad she bought from Safeway.

Her name is Anna and she has worked as a clinician at Planned Parenthood of Western Washington for six years.

I begin with a standard, if not boring, question. Why do you work for Planned Parenthood? She sighs and looks to the side. "I know it sounds cliché," says Anna, "but I know that what I do is empowering. I see about 20 patients per day, many of them students, many of them already mothers. The health care we're able to provide empowers them to live their lives. Students are the future of our country. Working moms are responsible for the well being of their families. If I can keep students in school and working moms working, our community is healthier. Our world is better."

What are the challenges or frustrations in your job? "There have been recent restrictions in government funding, like Take Charge and Title X, that effectively limits access for patients. We try to work with every patient that comes in on the cost of their services, but some just can't afford to pay. So they delay getting treatment for something—like

say a bladder infection—and by the time they do come in, we have a different set of problems to deal with. I've seen some stoic women in my time. They have pain, but they try to live with it, just thinking it will pass. Of course, that's the worst course of action. We need to see patients in a timely manner, and these cuts to federal funding are keeping patients from coming in when they really need to."

"Sometimes with self-pay patients it's a negotiation," says Anna, "I recommend treatment but then have to tell some patients what they absolutely have to do right now and what they can do next week when they get paid. That's the toughest part of my job."

My fifteen minutes are up. The salad isn't quite finished. She takes a deep breath, stands up and puts on her lab coat. She thanks me. I thank her. She turns and walks toward the staff kitchen door. She stops suddenly and turns back. "Did that sound okay?" she asks. I told her it did. "But I can tell you how to reduce your story down to one paragraph," she says immediately. "Write that my job is exhausting, challenging, and sometimes frustrating. But it's also a job where I know I'm making a difference in people's lives every day. And taken all together, I wouldn't have it any other way."



Breaking Down Barriers

continued from page 1

know that they are also swinging tiny hammers at the same time. They know what obstacles lay between tens of thousands of Puget Sound Area women, men, and teens, and affordable reproductive health care. These barriers to health care come in the form of

- 1) Poverty: more than half of PPWW's patients in 2007 had an income less than the Federal Poverty Level.
- 2) Restrictive new regulations: patients are finding it harder than ever to qualify for *Take Charge*, a program that drastically reduces family planning costs. And
- 3) Protests: 2007 saw an increase in protest activity at our health centers, using techniques of harassment and intimidation in order to keep our patients from accessing the vital care they need.

The good news is that these barriers are being challenged every day, and in some cases broken down. Planned Parenthood of Western Washington was instrumental in getting the Healthy Youth Act passed in 2007. The HYA sets medically-accurate guidelines for sex

education in our state and eliminates abstinence-only education that has proven to be ineffective.*

Volunteer Patient Escorts don yellow vests and help patients walk from their cars or the bus, through the gauntlet of protesters, to the doors of Planned Parenthood health centers. And the generous donations from working people all across our state mean PAP tests, STD screening and treatment, and birth control for the thousands of people who can't afford this vital care.

Barriers to reproductive health care are formidable, but thanks to the efforts and support of people like you these barriers can be overcome with enough "hammers." Thank you in advance for designating your workplace donation this campaign season to Planned Parenthood of Western Washington.

* April 2007 [Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education Programs](#). Mathematica Policy Research Inc., Christopher Trenholm, Barbara Devaney, et al.

Write in Me

We offer "Write in Me" journals in the lobbies of our health centers. It's a place for patients to express themselves anonymously. Their feelings. Their concerns.

We want to know what they're thinking. After all, its stories like theirs that are our reason for being. And reading them strengthens our resolve.

I'm 24 years old and waited 'til I was 20 to lose my virginity. I had a wonderful mom who encouraged me to make smart decisions. If it wasn't for her and Planned Parenthood I might have made a decision that would have made my life more difficult than it is now. All I can say is if you are going to have sex be smart. One bad decision could change your life forever.

I really like the idea of this book. It gives me something to do besides twiddling my thumbs, waiting to be taken back, feeling anxious and scared. I've never been HIV tested and here I am. You always see those commercials on TV about AIDS. I guess it's time to know either way. The whole idea of having AIDS is really scary. What do you do if you're tested positive? How do you go on with your life knowing you have an incurable STD that can be so easily passed on to anyone, all because you didn't use a condom. It's just crazy when you think about it. I'm glad Planned Parenthood is here, a place where I feel safe and comfortable. A place that feels supportive and eager to help. The staff is friendly and it eases a little stress off you knowing they're not judging you. Thanks for making this whole process a little easier.

Thanks PP for making it possible for me to get pregnant at the time I want and not any sooner.

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Charity Navigator: *Special Recognition for PPWW*

Charity Navigator, America's premier independent charity rating organization, has recognized Planned Parenthood of Western Washington for a seventh consecutive year of receiving its coveted "Four-Star" rating designation. Since it was formed in 2002, Charity Navigator has measured the efficiency and sustainability of charities objectively and without bias. It also provides donors with free access to evaluations.

Planned Parenthood of Western Washington is one of only 45 organizations nationally—out of more than 5,300 rated by Charity Navigator—to receive its highest rating for seven consecutive years.

"We are extremely proud to be among the top 1% of U.S. charities to receive this special recognition from Charity Navigator," said PPWW Board Chair Han Nachtrieb. "It is another indication of the solid stewardship we provide, and we hope it will add to the already strong confidence our donors have in the way their gifts are used."

To view the article on the Charity Navigator web site go to:

www.charitynavigator.org, click on "Articles" in the navigation bar and select "*Separating the Best from the Rest*" on the left side of the page.