

big sky impact

AUTUMN 2017

NEWS AND

EVENTS

RESOUNDING VICTORY FOR WOMEN Grassroots Activists Defeat Trumpcare

In July, the ACA repeal bill was defeated by a bipartisan vote, with every Senate Democrat and Republican Senators Susan Collins, John McCain, and Lisa Murkowski voting against the bill. A second attempt to bring an ACA repeal to a vote in September failed when several Senate Republicans, including McCain and Collins, vowed to vote against the bill.

Trumpcare is the worst bill for women in a generation and would have cut off access to vital health care services, disproportionately impacting women who already face unfair barriers to care, especially low-income women, women of color, and those living in rural areas. Trumpcare would have blocked millions from accessing birth control and cancer screenings at Planned Parenthood health centers, increased premiums by 20% and taken away health insurance from tens of millions of Americans.

For months, an army of pink-clad Planned Parenthood patients, supporters, and advocates organized thousands of actions from coast to coast — including rallies, speak-outs at congressional town halls, phone banks, petition deliveries to congressional offices, and field hearings.

During the last several months Planned Parenthood of Montana supporters:

- Made thousands of phone calls to members of Congress
- Organized more than two dozen events across the state, including rallies, petition drops, phone banks, and marches
- Delivered over 1,500 petition signatures to our members of Congress in opposition to “defunding” Planned Parenthood.

Planned Parenthood grassroots organizing has been a driving force in the successful, bipartisan effort to stop Trumpcare and protect access to Planned Parenthood.

Because of you, tens of millions of people are no longer about to lose the health care they and their families rely on. Because of you, Planned Parenthood health center doors across the country will be open to the 8,118 people who get care at Planned Parenthood every day.



planned parenthood supporters launched a vocal, persistent opposition to trumpcare from day one!

This victory is a powerful reminder that, together, our voices have the power to change the world. Thank you for defending access to care for millions.

While this health care fight is on hold for the moment, legislative and administrative attacks on our communities and our shared values will continue, including attacks on immigrants, transgender people, workers and people of color. We will continue to stand strong with our partners and communities to fight our shared battles. ■

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It has been a long time since I finished my formal education, but I have school-aged kids, and so fall feels like a new year to me. Since PPMT operates on a July to June fiscal year, it is a time of reset. Add in the reprieve from Congressional attacks on funding for the care we provide, and my mind is firmly focused on the future.

The patients who rely on PPMT for care are particularly vulnerable to threats to access—they are low-income; face health care disparities due to race, gender and sexuality; have contact with the criminal justice system; are minors; are single parents; are not eligible for insurance or depend on Medicaid Expansion for coverage. PPMT operates in the unstable, complicated and politically charged environment that plagues health care in the 21st century. These factors threaten the ability of PPMT to act on its vision in an effective, innovative, and bold manner.

The Board of Directors and staff of PPMT have identified four strategic priorities that will take on these challenges and move Montana toward a future where healthy sexuality and sexual health are considered an integral part of lifelong physical and mental well-being and where Montanans can easily access the tools they need to make informed decisions about their health and to act on those decisions.

How do we use those four priorities to create the future we envision?

Build a business model that protects patient care ... this means using innovation and technology to bring services to more Montanans, diversifying revenue streams to insulate PPMT from the vagaries of public funding and the health care market, and ensuring that we continue to provide the highest quality of care and the best experience to our patients while meeting them where they are. In the last year, this work has included the launch of telemedicine (see article on page 4) and increased service provision to incarcerated Montanans. Over the next few months we will be launching online health services.

Increase fundraising ... this means expanding our engagement of a stronger, more diverse, and more involved group of donors to help us fund our future and increase the shared investment in the health of our neighbors.

In our 2017 fiscal year, you helped us break fundraising records! Thousands of you are new donors to PPMT. We will be engaging you through events, as volunteers, and through communications such as this newsletter.

Move toward a training institute model for education ... this means increasing the number of trusted educators, both professionals and volunteers, so that in partnership we can bring comprehensive, age appropriate, medically-accurate sexuality and health education to Montanans outside of our population centers.

Learn more about how our Teen Council program empowers youth to educate one another on page 7.

Build our political strength so we can protect access in Montana and beyond ... this means engaging with elected officials, candidates, and voters, using both PPMT and PPAMT as appropriate. We must ensure policy reflects the public health imperative of access to health care for the most vulnerable among us without government interference.

During the last few months the Summer of Defiance program and PPAMT's work in the Special Election activated hundreds of volunteers in organizing, as we build power for 2018!

Together, we will build the future!

Onward,

Martha Stahl, President and CEO

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TOAST TO TESTER

More than 175 Planned Parenthood Advocates of Montana (PPAMT) supporters gathered this summer in Billings to raise a glass to celebrate Senator Jon Tester's leadership in standing up for Montanans' access to health care. We are grateful to Senator Tester for his unwavering support of Montana women and families, standing with Planned Parenthood, and for voting "no" on repealing the ACA.



This event was the final event of PPAMT's **Summer of Defiance**, a collaboration with Change Corps and Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Summer of Defiance provided hands-on organizing experience to six fellows, who honed their skills conducting outreach to individuals and businesses in Billings. ■

DANGEROUS BALLOT MEASURE Aims to Discriminate Against Transgender Montanans

PPAMT and our coalition partners are closely monitoring an effort to qualify a dangerous anti-transgender ballot measure for the November 2018 ballot. Extremists are pushing a measure that targets transgender Montanans. This initiative will make life harder for transgender people. We need more love, respect, and kindness and less fear, intimidation, and discrimination. Transgender individuals deserve the same basic protections as everyone else – to use public facilities with safety, privacy, and dignity.

We will stay in communication with you on this important fight to protect these values for all Montanans.

PPAMT Board of Directors

- Evan Barrett, *Chair* • Butte
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“... attempts by this congress to repeal obamacare and defund planned parenthood are unethical and dangerous and, if successful would greatly jeopardize the health and wellbeing of this nation's youth. health care should not be discretionary nor a privilege reserved for the wealthy. All young people deserve to lead safe and healthy lives.” — Debra Hauser, President, Advocates for Youth

INCREASING ABORTION ACCESS THROUGH TELEMEDICINE

IN the fall of 2016, Planned Parenthood of Montana launched medication abortion by telemedicine at our Great Falls Health Center. Across the country, access to abortion services is increasingly hampered by geography. According to the Guttmacher Institute, the premier reproductive health research organization, as of 2011, 89% of counties in the United States had no abortion provider. In Montana, more than half of women live in a county with no provider.

Telemedicine allows patients to access health care at the PPMT health center that is convenient for them, decreasing the financial and time burden of traveling for care. Previously, patients from Great Falls and the surrounding area had to travel to Billings or Helena for abortion services. For these patients, who live as far north as the Hi-Line, travel time ranged from an hour and a half to up to five hours.

Medication abortion, also known as the abortion pill, is a safe and effective way to end pregnancy up to 10 weeks. Medication abortion uses two medications, one of which is taken in a health center with the support and guidance of a medical professional and the other taken 24-48 hours later, usually at home.

The patient experience of medication abortion is nearly identical using telemedicine as it is in health centers with an on-site abortion provider. A typical face-to-face appointment requires a patient to come to one of our health centers and have the pregnancy confirmed and dated. If needed, a provider, either a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, will perform a physical exam. Once the patient is ready, a physician or physician assistant joins the patient in the room to go over final instructions and hands the patient the first of the two medications. With telemedicine, the patient receives the same level of in-person care at one of our physical locations. The only difference is that the physician or physician assistant joins the patient and a nurse in the exam room using a secure video connection.

“Access to quality health care should not be determined by where someone lives or their ability to take time off work. We are proud of the work we have done to remove barriers to needed health care services for our patients.” — Brittney Morris

For either appointment type, the patient leaves the center with a prescription for the second medication, a scheduled follow-up appointment, and a birth control plan.

“We knew this new approach to providing care would be beneficial to our patients and we were right; the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive,” said Brittney Morris, manager of the Great Falls Health Center.

Since the launch, PPMT has seen nearly 100 patients for telemedicine abortion services in Great Falls. PPMT’s launch of telemedicine for medication abortion was supported by a grant and technical assistance from Planned Parenthood Federation of America, as well as support from a private foundation. PPMT’s staff has traveled to national meetings of other affiliates looking to add this service in their areas. Based on the positive feedback from patients and the acute need for services in rural areas, PPMT staff is eager to begin offering telemedicine for medication abortion and for other services at additional health centers across the state.



RISING TO THE BEQUEST CHALLENGE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Bequest Challenge. PPMT received over a million dollars in bequest pledges resulting in \$90,000 in immediate funding! Together, we accomplished a monumental achievement for the future of our movement and organization.



Vicki Rice, a passionate, committed supporter from Helena, shared why she included PPMT in her estate. “Planned Parenthood. Just the name makes common sense to anyone who understands that humans are putting overwhelming pressure on the planet and that all lives are improved when children are born into welcoming

situations. Today, *many* Americans need Planned Parenthood to access essential reproductive health care. It is obvious that this *valuable* and *all-welcoming* health care resource is being attacked as never before by so many politically powerful forces.

I stand strongly for us, for our children, their children and for generations to come.”

Vicki understands the importance of gift planning. “Legacy gifting is a simple way to set up a future donation of a portion of your assets that could be left at the time of your death. I find this a comforting way to direct charitable giving without risking the loss of funds that could be needed in my retirement years. In the simplest terms, life experiences have shown me that none of us can be sure of tomorrow — so planning for one’s own death should be a priority for us all.”

For more information on how to include PPMT in your long-range charitable plans, contact Christina Roberts at christina.roberts@ppmontana.org or 406.830.3491.

Remembering PPMT in your will, a trust, or through an annuity is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give future generations. ■



SHOWING GRATITUDE THROUGH MONTHLY GIVING

“Someone I was close to in high school had a rough home life and had no one to answer her questions about reproductive health. Eventually, she went to Planned Parenthood in Missoula and they helped her through the issues she was facing. Seeing the change in her personality and disposition made me realize how much most of us take knowledge of our health and bodies for granted and that not knowing something can result in fear and erode confidence in every aspect of our daily lives. Especially in our teen years, questions about sexual health are sensitive and personal, and Planned Parenthood treated her with respect and kindness. She went on to become an ambitious brilliant woman, and I became a monthly donor because without Planned Parenthood, she might not have become the remarkable person and lifelong friend she is today.” — Max Tesoro



Max Tesoro is one of 350 donors who give monthly to PPMT to support our common sense approach to women’s health and well-being, which is based on respect for individuals’ right to make informed, independent decisions about health, sex, and family planning. The steady support we receive from monthly donors like Max makes it possible to respond to attacks that come our way, while continuing to be there for the patients we serve.

To become a monthly donor please visit plannedparenthood.org/Montana and click on donate on the upper right corner. You can choose for your gift to support PPMT, or you can split it between PPMT and Planned Parenthood Federation of America. You may also request a monthly bank transfer to Planned Parenthood of Montana.

If you have questions about becoming a monthly donor, contact Christina Roberts at 406.830.3491 or christina.roberts@ppmontana.org.



You Gave Local with Give Local

Thank you so much to the 187 people who donated almost \$15,000 through Give Local day in May to support reproductive health care in Montana! Not only did we surpass our goal of \$10,000 — which was MATCHED by a generous donor - but this donor was so impressed by the generosity of Montanans that they stepped up to match every dollar raised beyond the goal.

One of the fun aspects of Give Local, for those with a competitive spirit, is watching how our favorite causes compare to other worthy charities. Planned Parenthood of Montana was in the top ten for number of donors and amount raised in most of the Montana campaigns.

After recent efforts to repeal the ACA and defund Planned Parenthood, the numerous comments left on PPMT's giving pages lifted the spirits of PPMT's staff.

Below are some favorites:

“This gift is in honor of the wonderful staff at planned parenthood who are so committed to their clients and keep going no matter what type of opposition they face. kudos to these brave women and men!”

“Thanks to planned parenthood for all you do in our community! Affordable, safe, and informative health care?! heck yeah, I #standwithpp!”

See more thank you messages on the back page.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Sara Odenthal

SARA became a Planned Parenthood of Montana supporter when she was in high school. She began her journey as a patient at Planned Parenthood in Billings where she got her first pack of birth control; soon after, she became a member of the Teen Council program. (For more on Teen Council, see page 7.) Sara graduated high school in 2014 and moved to Missoula for massage therapy school. She sought volunteer opportunities at Planned Parenthood upon her arrival in Missoula and has become an integral part of the Missoula team during the past three years.

Sara has attended organizing and leadership conferences representing Planned Parenthood of Montana from coast to coast. Sara works tirelessly to recruit volunteers, organize events, and speak at rallies about her commitment to PPMT and why all of us need to be involved in protecting health care access.

“I feel so thankful that I am able to receive expert health care at Planned Parenthood where I feel safe and trust my providers to give me medically accurate information and the expert care I need and deserve. It is offensive to me that politicians keep trying to interfere with my chosen health care provider. I don't come to Planned Parenthood to make a political statement, I go for high quality, affordable care. Accessing high quality health care should not depend on your zip code, how much money you make, where you're from, who you love, or who you worship.”



Sara enjoys cooking, discovering new plants and their uses, and exploring the oddities of Montana. She practices massage therapy while pursuing her degree in Community Health at the University of Montana.

PPMT's Teen Council Gets Charged Up for 2017-2018

When most teenagers were fitting in last-minute family vacations or shopping for back-to-school essentials, PPMT's Teen Council members gathered for their annual retreat, held outside of Red Lodge. This retreat serves as a way for returning and new members to get to know each other, learn the sex education based curriculum, and start practicing their peer education skills.



This year Montana will have nine Teen Council members in Billings and seven members in Pryor. In the past, Billings Teen Council has facilitated classroom presentations to their peers in the spring. This year, in an effort to reach more people in more classrooms, the members set a goal to start presenting in the fall. Before Teen Council members can facilitate presentations, they must complete the peer education components of the curriculum, learning about the importance of sexuality education, classroom management skills, how to answer questions, and how to teach. Pryor Teen Council is in its second year and its members benefitted from being able to learn peer education skills from peers who have had experience presenting.

Teen Council members got hands-on practice at the retreat. During one session they had an hour to put together their presentations about consent and how to talk to a partner about sensitive issues such as sexually transmitted infections. This activity gives Teen Council members practice creating and facilitating presentations in a very safe space, and gives them the opportunity to be creative and have some fun teaching.

In addition to the peer education lessons, there was a lot of time for bonding, relaxing, and fun. Teen Council members spent their social time in the hot tub, playing pool, and enjoying the spectacular views at the lodge.

“Answering questions is a major part of sex education. Two rules cover the ground. First, always give a truthful answer to a question; secondly, regard sex knowledge as exactly like any other knowledge.” — Bertrand Russell

The retreat kicks off a busy year for Teen Council — weekly Teen Council meetings began in September and will continue through the end of May. In addition to presentations to their peers in the fall and spring, Teen Council begins recruiting for the next year's program in the spring. If you know a high school student from Billings or Pryor who is interested in Teen Council, they can contact the Billings Teen Council facilitator, Joli Mathis, at 406.869.5046 or joli.mathis@ppmontana.org.



Teen Council Facts • Did you know?

- ◀ Through 42 presentations, Billings Teen Council was able to directly reach 1,288 students attending Senior, Skyview, and West High Schools.
- ◀ Presentation topics included Healthy Relationships and Consent
- ◀ Billings Teen Council had 33 weekly meetings last year and an average attendance rate of 81%.



Planned Parenthood of Montana

1116 Grand Ave, Suite 201
Billings, MT 59102

plannedparenthood.org/montana

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“Thank you for making a difference in my life when I was a young woman.”

“care. no matter what. that is the reason I give to planned parenthood.”

“planned parenthood offers valuable affordable services to many many women who need it. I used it when I was a teenager and my daughters have also. thank you!”

Planned Parenthood of Montana Health Centers

Billings West

(406) 656.9980
1844 Broadwater #4

Monday 8 am – 6:30 pm
Tuesday Closed
Wednesday Closed
Thursday 8 am – 6:30 pm
Friday 7:30 am – 6 pm

Billings Heights

(406) 869.5040
100 W. Wicks Lane

Monday Closed
Tuesday 7:30 am – 6 pm
Wednesday 8 am – 5 pm
Thursday Closed
Friday Closed

Great Falls

(406) 454.3431
211 9th Street South

Monday 8 am – 5:30 pm
Tuesday 8 am – 12 pm
Wednesday 8 am – 5:30 pm
Thursday Closed
Friday 8 am – 5:30 pm

Helena

(406) 443.7676
1500 Cannon Street

Monday 8 am – 5:30 pm
Tuesday Closed
Wednesday 11 am – 7 pm
Thursday Closed
Friday 8 am – 5:30 pm

Missoula

(406) 728.5490
219 E. Main Street

Monday 9 am – 6 pm
Tuesday 9 am – 6 pm
Wednesday Closed
Thursday 9 am – 6 pm
Friday 9 am – 6 pm

Saturday (First and third Saturday of every month) 9 am – 12 pm

Billings Administration

Monday – Friday only
(406) 248.3636

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