

# FOCUS

Fall 2018

confidence  
dedication  
vision  
education  
thankful  
rights  
choice  
commitment  
activism  
trust

PLANNED PARENTHOOD IS

freedom  
compassion  
equity  
respect  
access  
care



Planned Parenthood of Southern New England

CELEBRATING 95 YEARS OF CARE

## Triumphs & Trials: the Fight for Reproductive Rights Continues

### The Fight to #SaveSCOTUS

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England **volunteers and supporters from Connecticut and Rhode Island showed up, spoke out, and fought back** to demonstrate strong opposition to the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh, demanding that our representatives in Washington act NOW to protect our fundamental rights and freedoms. **Together, we organized #BelieveSurvivors rallies and solidarity spaces** in New Haven and West Hartford. #BelieveSurvivors rallies and solidarity spaces were organized in New Haven and West Hartford. People demonstrated support for Dr. Christine Blasey Ford and shared their stories to elevate the voices of survivors.

voters in key target states like Maine, Missouri, Indiana, North Dakota, Arizona and West Virginia. **Despite the outcome of the call, every call mattered.**

In Rhode Island, we continued to fight back by supporting events like "Speak Up and Speak Out," a public forum on October 21. Organized by former Executive Director of PPRI, Mary Ann Sorrentino, and our allies at The Woman Project, the forum highlighted the need to take action in our state because of the threat of a Supreme Court that now has Brett Kavanaugh. **We thank the volunteers who were able to make an impact when it counts.**

Volunteers, including students from Yale's Reproductive Justice Action league, called

### Your Rights. Your Vote. Your Future.



Brown University students make phone calls to make sure people get out to vote. Campus volunteer lead, Ethan Morelion (not pictured) is a Brown University Bonner Fellow with PPSNE in RI.

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# Thank You for Increasing Access to Health Care at Planned Parenthood

Amanda Skinner, President and CEO

I was catching up with a friend a few days after the painful Supreme Court confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh when she told me, "my heart keeps breaking, and I don't know what to do." 2018 has been full of devastating events that are testing the moral fibers of our democracy. I empathized with my friend's struggle. As we talked, **I also felt extremely grateful to be part of Planned Parenthood, because, every day, even in these harrowing times, what we do provide care - no matter what.** We are able to do that because of supporters like you.

You make it possible for us to keep our doors open and provide vital services to our patients like Angela\*. After a recent visit, Angela shared that the provider she saw, "...not only treated me for what I came in for but also another unrelated

**"It's clear that we are in a time of both incredible challenge and extraordinary opportunity."**

issue. I can tell she is genuinely concerned with my treatment and sexual health. I would not hesitate to recommend her to anyone in need of care."

With your support, we are able to engage young people like Nia\*, one of our STARS, teen

peer educators, who is challenging her school's abstinence-based approach to sex education by providing information to her peers about safer sex practices. When speaking about her experience as a STAR, Nia says, "I'm happy to have found my people." **This year, we are engaging over 90 young leaders like Nia in several communities across Connecticut and Rhode Island.** Their passion, courage, and conviction are an inspiration, and give me hope for our future.

Because of you and thousands of people like you, we were able to achieve significant legislative wins in both Connecticut and Rhode Island this year, protecting



access to contraceptives and other reproductive health services. **With no shortage of cruel and harmful policies coming out of the current administration and the challenging outcomes of the recent elections, our advocacy work at the state level is more important than ever.** We are heartened by the outcomes of the recent midterm elections, and we also know there is much more work to do. Your support enables us to continue fighting so that all people can access safe, comprehensive, judgment free health care.

It's clear that we are in a time of both incredible challenge and extraordinary opportunity. **We are so grateful for your partnership in ensuring that PPSNE continues on its relentless pursuit of our mission.** Together, we will continue forging a path towards a world where access to health care doesn't depend on who you are, where you live, or who you love, and a world where every person has the opportunity to choose their own path to a healthy and meaningful life.

On behalf of all of us at PPSNE, thank you for your support. Our best wishes to you and yours this holiday season.

In solidarity,  
Amanda

\*Names changed to protect privacy

## PPSNE Awarded for Innovation & Patient-Centered Care

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America Medical Services Division presented PPSNE the coveted Edelin Award. The Edelin Award is a recognition for our innovative achievements of attaining Level III Patient-Centered Medical Home status and the Planetree Bronze designation. **Our award-winning Hartford health center located on Albany Avenue is nationally recognized for providing patient-centered care and ensuring it works best for patients, families, and communities.**

The Level III Patient-Centered Medical Home and Planetree Bronze designation are recognitions that PPSNE works in collaboration with local health care networks and helps support healthy communities in the Hartford area. This recognition led to PPSNE's recent inclusion in the newly forming North Hartford Triple Aim Collaborative, which brings together community partners in collaboration to improve the health and well-being of the community.



Mary Bawza (left) and Amanda Skinner (right) accept PPSNE's Edelin Award from the PPFA Medical Services Division.

## Our New Medical Interpreter Program: The Bridge to Exceptional Health Care

Planned Parenthood offers life-saving health care services intended for all people. We continuously work to decrease the barriers to health care and increase positive outcomes



for our patients. PPSNE is a Cross Cultural Health Care Program licensed provider of the Bridging the Gap Medical Interpreter Training®. For nearly a decade, we have trained and certified our medical assistants to enhance the health care experience of our non-English speaking patients. Today, PPSNE is proud to offer this certification opportunity to other medical professionals.

In June 2018, we launched the Medical Interpreter Program in Hartford, Conn. We are reaching out to

medical assistants from health centers, hospitals, doctors' offices, and community health care facilities to help meet their cultural and language needs. **Proper communication between patients and providers is critical when seeking health care. Medical interpreters make a difference in the medical field by assuring that misunderstandings do not occur between patients and providers.** This ensures the best possible health care for patients. Trained medical interpreters affirm and check with patients for understanding and promote patient well-being while following professional guidelines using the language most comfortable for them.

Our Medical Interpreter Training Program is a 40-hour course that satisfies the first step in becoming a certified medical interpreter and allows participants to pursue certification with the Commission for Health Care or the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters.

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## Support for Reproductive Freedom Grows in Rhode Island

“In accordance with Rhode Island’s proud history of freedom of choice and conscience, let us be proactive in protecting a woman’s right to choose - a woman’s right to full and complete autonomy.”

*Rabbi Howard Voss-Altman, Temple Beth-El, Providence, RI*

“I do not ask legislators to choose abortion for themselves. I do not ask them to recommend it to their families and loved ones - that’s their business. I simply ask them to trust women, in consultation with their families and doctors, to make responsible choices for their reproductive futures. I ask for this basic demonstration of respect.”

*Diane Barese,  
member of PPV!RI  
PAC and Rhode  
Island Resident*

The Reproductive Health Care Act (RHCA) is a major priority in Rhode Island. It would protect access to safe, legal abortion in the Ocean State. **The RHCA is necessary to guarantee that Rhode Island women don’t lose the protections of *Roe v. Wade*.** Passing this critical legislation will protect us from the ideology of extremists in Washington. This is especially important now that Brett Kavanaugh has been confirmed to the Supreme Court.

Rhode Island does not have a state law or a court decision proactively protecting the right to abortion. In fact, there are several laws still on the books that are currently unenforceable due to court decisions but have not been formally repealed. This includes a law passed in reaction to *Roe v. Wade* that makes providing an abortion a felony crime. Rewritten in 2017 to include repeal of these “zombie laws,” a version of the RHCA has been introduced every year since at least 1992.

In 2018, a record 28 State Representatives and 13 State Senators co-sponsored the RHCA, which was introduced by Rep. Edie Ajello and Sen. Gayle Goldin. At hearings before the House and Senate Judiciary Committees, testimony by supporters outnumbered opponents by more than five-to-one. **Most recently, an independent poll revealed 71% of RI residents support passing a law to protect the right to abortion, with only 19% opposed. In 2019, we expect the RHCA to have even more co-sponsors - and to be signed into law!** For more information on the Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom, **visit [ricrf.org](http://ricrf.org).**

“Even if the Court does not overturn *Roe*, it will chip away at reproductive choice by permitting states to enact onerous restrictions until *Roe* is meaningless. There is plenty to worry about and no time to wait.”

*June Speakman, Roger Williams University*

## Reproductive Justice, Rights and Health Advocates Stand with PPSNE

**THANK YOU** for your generous support of PPSNE and the enlightening events *Defend. Support. Empower.* held on Tuesday, October 16 in Norwalk, and *Cocktails, Conversation & Celebration* held on Monday, October 22 in New Haven. Because of you, we raised more than \$130,000 to support the important work of PPSNE. The two events were full of inspiration, encouragement and insight.



Photo: Allie Dearie Photography

*Dr. Willie Parker poses with current and former STARS and PPSNE Educator Seth Poole. (L-R) Dante, Seth Poole, Dr. Willie Parker, Nascha, Josh and Pablo Barnes*

Dahlia Lithwick, *Slate* senior editor, joined us in Norwalk and described the impact the new Supreme Court will have on reproductive rights. In New Haven, our very own Dr. Tim Spurrell delivered a profound testimony inspiring those in attendance to get involved; and Dr. Willie Parker, reproductive justice activist, shared inspirational words of encouragement from his book, "Life's Work: A Moral Argument for Choice".

All proceeds will go to care for our 75,000 patients who receive high-quality health care, regardless of their ability to pay.

## ACLU of RI Presents PPSNE with the Civil Libertarian of the Year Award

On October 25, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Rhode Island presented PPSNE the "Civil Libertarian of the Year" Award at its Annual Meeting in Providence. We are honored and grateful for the enduring partnership with the ACLU of RI in protecting reproductive rights in Rhode Island for more than 50 years.



*PPSNE President & CEO Amanda Skinner accepts the award on PPSNE's behalf, along with (L-R) Michelle Soto, Katey Gorski, Amanda Skinner, Susan Yolen, Craig O'Connor, and board member Doree Goodman. Also pictured (right) is ACLU of RI Executive Director Steven Brown.*

# My Choices, My Story

by Elissa Garber-Hyman



Sharing a personal story like this is difficult. However, if it can help others realize the important role Planned Parenthood of Southern New England plays in women's reproductive rights – I will gladly share it.

I have had two abortions in my life.

In 1980, I became pregnant as a junior in college. Fortunately for me, it was several years after *Roe v. Wade* was decided, clinics were relatively accessible and the opposition to abortion was not as it is today. **Planned Parenthood was there for me; no judgment, no questions asked.**

The second time around was a different experience. In 1991, ten years into my marriage, my husband and I were excited to be first-time parents. That was until we received the results of

my amniocentesis – at 16 weeks, we learned that our child had a severe birth defect, which would cause the child to be either stillborn, or die shortly after birth. My doctor, my husband, and I felt that the most humane decision was to have an abortion.

This time, opposition to abortion was in full force. This made finding a doctor to perform an abortion in the 16<sup>th</sup> week very difficult, even though I was living in New York City. Ultimately, I did find a doctor, but it was a completely devastating experience for not only did I have to surreptitiously go through a procedure which took two agonizing days, but I was mourning a very wanted baby, and I felt shameful. This process helped me to fully grasp what it must have been like when abortion wasn't legal.

## Why do I support Planned Parenthood?

The choices I have made weren't easy, but they were choices that I was able to make without interference. I'm angry that 45 plus years later we are still fighting this battle. **Let's keep a woman's right to choose OUR CHOICE.**

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*Your Rights. Your Vote. Your Future.* continued from page 1.

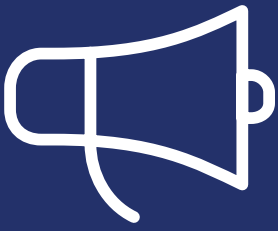
The national campaign **Your Rights. Your Vote. Your Future/Tus Derechos. Tu Voto. Tu Futuro** helped people in local communities – including visitors to Planned Parenthood health centers – get registered. Our goal was to encourage people to make their voices heard on Election Day, regardless of their background, beliefs, or political ideology. Connecticut Health Center Advocacy Program (HCAP) volunteer leader Miranda Rector organized teams to do voter registration and voter pledge canvassing in New Haven. Volunteers listened to patients share their stories, signed many up to vote, and asked them to pledge to vote, to make sure that every voice in our communities was heard.

## Healthy Communities

In Rhode Island, Health Center Advocacy Program (HCAP) volunteers were canvassing in communities that are medically underserved and have residents with low-incomes **to speak with community members about reproductive health care, prevention of STIs, and to connect them with our health center's services.**

Volunteers spoke with residents in Providence, Central Falls, North Providence and Woonsocket.





Paid for by Planned  
Parenthood Votes!

## THANK YOU!

Your vote and your volunteerism helped us elect women and men who make women's health and reproductive rights a priority. There is still work to do to **ensure all people have the right to the lifesaving health care they need** from the provider of their choice regardless of their zip code.

Contact us at [organizing@ppsne.org](mailto:organizing@ppsne.org) to volunteer to continue this important work.

## PrEP Research Brings National Recognition to PPSNE

Since 2010, PPSNE has participated vigorously in 39 industry sponsored clinical research studies. This groundbreaking work demonstrates promise in transforming clinical practice for our patients and has resulted in several publications submitted to journals and awaiting review, currently in press, and recently published.

Our work examines barriers to women using PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis, medication to lower the risk of becoming infected with HIV). The barriers include racial inequities, stigma, and the challenges to preventing HIV for women being released from correctional institutions.

We also held a critical examination of the current guidelines for prescribing PrEP and how women are disadvantaged by adherence to those "out of touch" guidelines; and we examined the ways we can provide intervention to help young women reduce sexual risk associated with binge drinking.

Not only will all of this work help us make changes to our clinical practice to benefit our patients, but also, publication in national journals means our work will set the bar as industry standard, taken into consideration by other clinical practices and incorporated into better ways to meet critical health care needs.

### JUST A FEW OF OUR RECENTLY PUBLISHED WORK:

*"Linking Women Experiencing Incarceration to Community-Based HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Care: Protocol of a Pilot Trial", Submitted October, 2018 to Addiction Science & Clinical Practice*

*"Current US Guidelines for Prescribing HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Disqualify Many Women Who Are at Risk and Motivated to Use PrEP", Submitted October 2018 to The Lancet HIV.*

*"Differences in Medical Mistrust Between Black and White Women: Implications for Patient-Provider Communication*

*About PrEP". Manuscript accepted for publication. AIDS and Behavior, September 2018.*

*(2018). "HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis stigma as a multidimensional barrier to uptake among women who attend Planned Parenthood". Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes, 79(1), 46-53.*

*(2018). "Alcohol use and sexual risk behavior in young women: A qualitative study". AIDS and Behavior.*

**SAVE THE DATE | APRIL 3, 2019**

## Annual Spring Luncheon

11 AM - 2 PM,  
Stamford Marriott, Stamford, CT

Contact us today for more information, to become a sponsor and purchase tickets: (203) 752-2813 or email [special.events@ppsne.org](mailto:special.events@ppsne.org).



### FOCUS Contributors

Stephen Grant  
Clair Kaplan  
Craig O'Connor  
Gretchen Raffa  
Kafi Rouse  
Pierrette C. Silverman  
Erika Ulanecki  
Susan Yolen

*Medical Interpreter Program* continued from page 3.

Once the program is completed, the participant is a Certified Medical Interpreter. Their new skills will include health care system navigation, medical terminology including body systems and their functions, various types of interpretation and a code of ethics. They will become the bridge to exceptional health care.

### MEDICAL INTERPRETER PROGRAM

2019 sessions will be held in Providence, New Haven & Hartford. **Register Today!**

For more information, please contact us by calling (860) 315-2290, or via email at [medicalinterpreter@ppsne.org](mailto:medicalinterpreter@ppsne.org).



## JOIN THE GLOBAL GIVING MOVEMENT ON GIVING TUESDAY!

November 27, 2018  
#GIVINGTUESDAY

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#### PPSNE Information

Headquarters: 203.865.5158

[ppsne.org](https://ppsne.org)

Call 1.800.230.PLAN (7526) to reach the center nearest you

345 Whitney Avenue  
New Haven, CT 06511

175 Broad Street  
Providence, RI 02903

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