

## Increasing Access to Safe Abortion Worldwide

No woman or girl should be turned away from the care she needs. For nearly 100 years, Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) has worked tirelessly to improve women's health and safety, prevent unintended pregnancies, and advance the right and ability of individuals and families to make informed and responsible reproductive health choices. For more than 40 years, Planned Parenthood Global, the international arm of PPFA, has been leveraging that experience to support access to sexual and reproductive health care, including safe abortion, around the world. In partnership with more than 50 organizations across Africa and Latin America, we work to ensure that women, men, and young people in some of the world's most neglected areas have access to the health care they need to control their futures. Last year, we supported partners to, among other things:

- Offer abortion services and post-abortion care at 878 static and mobile facilities;
- Train 230 abortion and post-abortion care providers;
- Provide 56,593 abortion and post-abortion care procedures (41% medication);
- Reach more than 285,525 community members with education and information about sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- Provide contraceptives to 334,799 clients;
- And advocate for laws and policies to strengthen and expand access to sexual and reproductive health including safe abortion.

### Highlights from Planned Parenthood Global's Work in Latin America 2014 – 2015

#### Abortion Regulations in Ecuador Bring Clarity – and Access

In December, advocates for sexual and reproductive rights in Ecuador achieved a key win when the Ministry of Health approved the country's first regulations on therapeutic abortion. The regulations not only recognize the right to legal abortion under certain circumstances in the country, but also confirm the government's obligation to ensure access to safe abortion care in these cases.



Developed in coordination with civil society, including three of Planned Parenthood Global's partners, the regulations include detailed descriptions and instructions for legal therapeutic abortion to protect a woman's health or life, or in cases of mentally incapacitated women who suffer sexual violence. Our partners continue to work to ensure their broad implementation.

### **Provider Share Workshops Combat Stigma**

Stigma is pervasive, and impedes access to and provision of sexual and reproductive health services, including abortion. This year, Planned Parenthood Global has continued its support of providers to address the social impact of abortion stigma in development work, and to support healthy coping skills both individually and as an organization or group. Through Provider Share Workshops in Guatemala, Peru, and Ecuador we worked with both clinic-based and community-based partner staff. More than 100 participants (doctors, nurses, administrators, and support staff) shared their stories of helping women access abortion, and explored the impact the work has on their lives and their communities. They also opened the door to frank conversations about women's rights and access. Participants were asked to bring an object that answered the question: What does providing abortion services mean to my community? The items were varied and included an umbrella, a shoe, a stick (wick), etc. One provider shared a rope and shared that women in her community use similar rope to kill themselves in the face of an unplanned pregnancy. The workshops were well received and informal evaluations already point toward positive results and greater openness among staff. Planned Parenthood Global will continue to support our partners to understand and overcome pervasive stigma related to the provision of sexual and reproductive health care.

### **Reducing Complications and Mortality through Community-Based Access to Misoprostol**

Since 2003, the WHO has recommended that abortion be provided at the lowest appropriate level of the health-care system – and in many communities, that means by nurses, midwives, promoters, and other community-level health workers. In response to this recommendation, Planned Parenthood Global developed "Misoprostol for Women's Health: A Community-Based Provider Manual," a manual designed as a resource for community-based providers containing detailed protocol and procedures for providing misoprostol paired with helpful illustrations. Incorporating input from diverse leaders in women's health, this document provides a framework for advancing community-based access to misoprostol (CBAM) to reduce deaths and injury resulting from postpartum hemorrhage, incomplete, and unsafe abortion. The CBAM model is informed by current scientific research and field experience, and is a living document adaptable for emerging evidence.

In Latin America, we recently released an updated version of the manual that includes more pictorial representations, and that is more useful for community providers.

