



PPMM Education's Regional Program Manager Cathy S. speaks with our Sacramento peer educators who are trained to inform other young people about STI-prevention

PPMM on front lines of preventing STIs in California

The California Department of Public Health has asked Planned Parenthood Mar Monte to help the state combat soaring rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), another example of the essential role we play in the community safety net. Already, the data collected at our health centers in the Central Valley, which has among the highest rates of STIs in the country, may put PPMM on track to have a major influence in preventing the spread of one infection in particular.

While cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea have increased in recent years, it is the dramatic spike in cases of congenital syphilis - when the infection is passed from mother to newborn - that prompted the health department last year to ask PPMM for assistance in collecting data as part of an effort to discover why so many infected women aren't being diagnosed and treated for syphilis before they give birth. PPMM agreed to screen every female patient of child-bearing age at our Central Valley health centers for syphilis as part of a routine visit, not just those patients who request STI-screening or who fall into the "high risk" categories defined by Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines.

Syphilis, while being very treatable in the early stages, can cause serious illness and birth defects in infants. "The numbers of positive test results we've seen, even at this early stage, are kind of shocking," said PPMM's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Laura Dalton. "This has the potential to change the way we think about all national screening guidelines for syphilis. It's that significant."

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PPMM on the front lines

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Health officials brought PPMM in to the data-collection process knowing that many women who may not be receiving services in the state health care system are likely to be PPMM patients. The idea is that by sticking only to current CDC guidelines for STI-screening, far too many people may be falling under the radar, including women of child-bearing age.

Just in the past several months, there have been dozens of positive syphilis tests at two of PPMM's Central Valley health centers, a far greater rate than usual. "The numbers are pretty mind-blowing," said Michael Liberato, director of PPMM's Advanced Practice Clinicians training program which oversees implementation of the new screening protocol. "I often ask patients if they know about the risks of STIs in their area, and most are completely unaware."

Many PPMM health educators, who do crucial outreach in schools and in the community, also find that young people in regions with high STI-rates have no idea how common the infections are. Mario Alfaro, a PPMM educator in the Fresno region, says he's seen students' jaws drop when he tells them.

"Some of them say things like, 'Well, my girlfriend's using an IUD, so I won't get it,' or they think they can't give anything to her," Mario said. "I have to tell them that condoms are the only kind of birth control that will protect them from STIs. That's when you can see it start to sink in, for real."

Zauna Nuru-Bates, a 17-year-old student at The Met high school in Sacramento, also said her classmates don't know that the area is a hot spot for some STIs. Zauna is a member of PPMM's peer educator program, which trains young people to speak with others their age about sexual-health information and resources.



PPMM Education Program Coordinator Jenna P. teaches a sex ed class, one of the best places for teens to learn about STI-prevention

"There's a lot of stigma around STIs," Zauna said. "I tell people that you're not gross if you have one. If you come to Planned Parenthood, you can get a confidential test and treatment and not be judged. There's also ways to protect yourself. That's really important for people to hear."

Dr. Dalton said that PPMM's reputation for providing easily accessible and non-judgmental care is why many patients are more likely to come to our health centers for screening. "This is one of the things that make us unique, knowing that we won't judge people's lives and that we just give them treatment they need," she said. "The public health department knows that the data we will be able to share is critical to helping prevent the spread of STIs."



Did You Know?

Q: What is the most appropriate age to begin having conversations with your children about sex, puberty, bodies, and relationships?

- a. Pre-school (age 0-4)
- b. Elementary (age 5-8)
- c. Middle School (age 9-13)
- d. High School (age 14-19)
- e. Never, leave that to their peers!

(See page 4 for the answer.)

Letter From PPMM CEO Stacy Cross

Hello Friends,

The year has gotten off to a great start with an inspiring 45th anniversary celebration of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision and sustained enthusiasm for the 2018 Women's March. Our wonderful donors at January's annual Roe luncheon in Monterey exceeded PPMM's fundraising goal to help support our health services and education programs, and PPMM joined 11 Women's Marches from Reno to Bakersfield. I was so glad to get a chance to talk with many of you. Your energy is contagious!

Though it's hard to believe that in 2018 we're still fighting to protect women's right to control our own bodies, the marches were a reflection of the positive momentum leading into the mid-term elections. A record number of women are running for office, determined to protect reproductive rights against relentless political attacks.



Meanwhile, as you'll see in this issue of the newsletter, PPMM is beginning the year at the forefront of a statewide effort to combat the rising rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in many of the regions we serve. We have also joined with Planned Parenthood affiliates in California to launch a strategic plan in 2018 that aims to make improved health outcomes in the state a top priority. This will enhance our partnership with California's public health department, and we'll be telling you more about it as the plan develops.

We are so grateful to have strong supporters like you as we work together this year to protect and expand health care-access, despite a congressional majority that's trying to eliminate it. With you by our side, we know we will continue to rise to the challenge!

Best,
Stacy
Stacy Cross
President and CEO



PPMM at the Women's Marches

Millions of people participated in the 2018 Women's Marches in the U.S., including these communities in PPMM's service area:

- 40,000 in Oakland
- 35,000 in Sacramento
- 25,000 in Santa Cruz
- 20,000 in San Jose
- 10,000 in Reno
- 3,000 in Seaside
- 2,000 in Fresno
- Plus thousands more in Visalia, Modesto, and Hanford

To see photos from the Jan 20th Women's Marches, visit our Facebook page: [@plannedparenthoodmm](#)

Planned Parenthood supporters at the San Jose Women's March

From Mar to Monte

NEWS FROM AROUND THE AFFILIATE

Innovative Community Health Care

Our health centers are located in large cities as well as smaller communities. We're proud to offer the same level of cutting-edge care across the affiliate.



Patient-Centered Health Care Pilot

A new pilot program has begun at two PPMM health centers that focuses on making patients full partners in their care, establishing a relationship of trust that encourages them to return to our health centers and improves health outcomes in the community.

Instead of the common practice of having the provider issue instructions for the patient to follow, the patient-centered, shared decision-making process recognizes that both patients and providers bring expertise. If a patient is coming to us for contraceptives, for example, she is consulted as the "expert" on her own life and priorities, and the provider gives expert advice about the best birth control methods for her. This approach also reduces the chance of unintended pregnancies since patients are less likely to abandon their birth control because it doesn't fit into their lifestyle.

"We consider it a big success when a patient comes in to tell us that her current birth control method isn't right for her, and she wants to change it - rather than just stopping it completely," said PPMM's patient-centered pilot program leader, Associate Director of Advanced Practice Clinicians/Training Jessica Dieseldorff.



"Women's birth control needs may change as their lifestyle, income, and relationships change. Engaging with patients to clarify the method they want means we can make sure that they have the birth control that's most effective and convenient for them."

By building trusting, respectful relationships, these conversations between clinician and patient become a natural part of each patient visit. And patients are more likely to come back.

4th Generation HIV Testing

For the past year, PPMM has been providing new "4th generation HIV testing" – the most up-to-date testing available – as our standard of care for all patients requesting HIV tests. This rapid-response testing, which many health care providers in our region do not yet offer, can detect HIV antigens within 10 days of exposure.

Older testing methods rely only on HIV antibodies and require up to three weeks after exposure to yield a positive result. The faster results with 4th generation HIV testing enable us to offer the careful screening that is essential for effective post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) treatments.

Enhanced Patient Portal

PPMM recently rolled out new improvements to our popular patient portal. Patients who sign up for the portal can exchange confidential messages with their health care provider. They can view most lab results online and even download their medical records.

Patients can also schedule appointments, request medication refills or even email the Nurse Triage Line to receive a secure response from within the portal. Soon, they will also be able to receive education materials from their providers through the portal.

5 Important Questions for 2018

If there's one lesson we learned last year, it's that every voice counts. Whether we are talking to our friends, family, or our elected officials and candidates for office, having conversations about what's important to us is critical.

1. Are you registered to vote?

There are some people who think their vote doesn't count. This is simply not true!

The former CEO of Nevada Advocates for Planned Parenthood Affiliates (NAPPA), Elisa Cafferata, tells the story of her mother, Patty Cafferata, winning a primary election for a State Assembly seat in Nevada by just one vote.

We have seen several examples of elections being decided by a few votes, most recently in Virginia. It's important for everyone to register to vote and make sure to keep their voter registration information up to date!

In both California and Nevada it is easy to do online by visiting www.sos.ca.gov for California or www.nvsos.gov for Nevada.

2. Do you support fundamental rights for everyone?

Fundamental rights are privileges that all people are entitled to as human beings, including freedom and equality. One of these is the right to have control over your own body and reproductive choices, including abortion care.

3. What is your commitment to protecting health care-access for people in our communities?

Several laws have been introduced around the country that restrict or eliminate access to health care –including emergency medical services – for people who are new immigrants, members of LGBTQ communities, or even unmarried women. These so-called “moral” or religious clauses can disenfranchise people from access to necessary health care, including birth control.



4. Do you want to see Planned Parenthood defunded?

Ask your friends, family, and elected officials if they value the essential health care services that Planned Parenthood has been providing for more than 100 years. Planned Parenthood's services prevent unintended pregnancies, protect women from cancer, and provide essential reproductive health care to women, men and teens that save taxpayer dollars and ensure a healthier future for our communities. Start a conversation, listen and share your experiences and thoughts.

5. Would you like to get involved?

When was the last time you called an elected official to lodge a complaint, share your opinion, or thank her/him for their vote on an issue or law that impacts the community? We are at a pivotal moment when we can no longer sit back and stay quiet. We have to let our elected officials hear our voices – now!

Did You Know?

Answer from Page 5

A: Pre-school and beyond. We recommend age-appropriate, non-judgmental and open conversations throughout your children's lives about these issues. There's no better resource than a supportive parent/adult. You don't need to be an expert, you just need to be willing to talk AND listen. For a go-to resource with answers and advice about how to talk to kids, from pre-K to college, visit plannedparenthood.org/learn/parents.

☺ These are some of our favorite signs seen at marches across the country on January 20th, 2018:

- “Grab them by the Midterm.”
- “Vaginas brought you into this world... Vaginas will Vote you out!”
- “Please note the lack of Nazis at Our Marches.”
- “Tweet Others as you would like to be Tweeted.”
- “I’m not allowed to act like our President.”
- “Now you pissed off Grandma!”
- “In our America, Women are in charge of Their Own Bodies, Science is Real, Black Lives Matter, Diversity is celebrated, LOVE is LOVE, United we Stand, Divided we Fall.”



☹ “I strongly supported the House of Representatives Pain-Capable bill, which would end painful, late-term abortions nationwide. I call upon the Senate to pass this important law and send it to my desk for signing.”
– Donald Trump addressing the anti-reproductive rights “March for Life” crowd

Fact ✓ Based on widely debunked science, the bill failed in the Senate. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists wrote, “The fetus does not even have the physiological capacity to perceive pain until at least 24 weeks of gestation.”

Still, all 14 California Republican members of the House of Representatives voted in favor of Pain-Capable bill, including those in PPMM service regions: Rep. David Valadao, Rep. Jeff Denham and House Majority Leader, Rep. Kevin McCarthy. Nevada Rep. Mark Amodei voted for the bill as well.

☹ “Americans are more and more pro-life, you see that all the time.” – Donald Trump continuing his address at the “March for Life.”

Fact ✓ In reality, only 18 percent of Americans believe abortion should be illegal in all circumstances, and those numbers have been remarkably steady for decades.

5 Things You Can Do Now

Download and share this list at ppmarmonte.org/5-things

1. DONATE

You can make a donation today to support PPMM’s mission: ppmarmonte.org/donate-today or call us at (408) 795-3780

2. VOLUNTEER

Join hundreds of volunteers across PPMM who support our mission daily: ppmarmonte.org/volunteer

3. SHARE YOUR STORY

Tell us about a time PPMM helped you or someone you care about: ppmarmonte.org/my-story

4. HUG A HEALTH CENTER

Drop off a thank you card or other sign of support for staff at your local health center.

5. ENGAGE

Hear the latest via our social media work. Join the conversation, share with friends, help spread the word:

- 🐦 twitter.com/ppmarmonte
- 📘 fb.com/plannedparenthoodmm
- 📷 instagram.com/ppmarmonte
- 📺 youtube.com/PlannedParenthoodMM



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