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Advocates of Michigan

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MICHIGAN'S CHOICE

The Newsletter of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan



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PPAM Intern Learns to Speak Out, Earns Award

Congratulations to Nicole Starcher, a PPAM intern from Oakland University who won a Barbara B. Hamilton Award based on an essay she submitted about her work. Below is an excerpt from that essay. We are privileged to work with such thoughtful and committed students and are proud of the level of education, experiences, and training we are able to provide them.

"The accomplishment that I am most proud of is my internship with Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan. Through this wonderful experience I have had the privilege of working with like minded people who have a profound passion for reproductive rights for women and safe sexual health for everyone. I have always strongly believed in these particular positions but since working with the organization, a much deeper passion has developed..."

This experience has made me a very different person. I began my internship as a quiet and moderately reserved individual but with the outreach along with other issues that have happened throughout the semester requiring support and courage, I have found

my voice and strength to advocate for what I believe in..."

Because of my experience with Planned Parenthood I have become a confident advocate for women's rights and my political views have become clearer. I understand now more than ever that politics matter. Knowing and understanding what is happening within the political arena is one of the most important things that we can do to better our world and make a world that supports women instead of oppressing them. I have found the courage to stand up for what I believe in no matter how difficult or frustrating the obstacle may be. I have Planned Parenthood to thank for allowing me to discover the person I am meant to be."



Nicole modeling a condom dress at Planned Parenthood's Ferndale Health Center Grand Opening on April 3.

Election 2012: Vote to End the War on Women

Nearly two years from the 2010 elections that brought the most anti-choice elected officials to office in Michigan since Roe, what has it meant for women? The federal government nearly shutdown to stop three million women from access to essential health care services at Planned Parenthood. Social conservatives fought to block women from affordable birth control without co-pays, and **each of the Republican candidates for president made promises to defund Planned Parenthood**. The presumptive nominee, Mitt Romney, even vowed to get rid of Planned Parenthood. **Virginia** fought over legislation mandating transvaginal probes for women exercising their constitutional right to choose, **Texas and Indiana** jeopardized funding for all Medicaid patients to block funds for Planned Parenthood, personhood battles in **several states** threatened access to basic birth control, and **Arizona** defined pregnancy before conception.

Right here in Michigan, the legislature is considering **nearly forty**

bills to restrict reproductive choice, with some going so far as to ban certain types of birth control. Legislation has been introduced to defund Planned Parenthood and leave the 90,000 men, women, and teens who count on Planned Parenthood without access to health care. Anti-choice elected officials have launched an attack on women and Planned Parenthood, but we know that Michigan voters are sick of these divisive tactics. By a 20-point margin, **Michigan voters do not want to see Planned Parenthood defunded** and overwhelmingly want to elect candidates that support Planned Parenthood.

The solution is clear

We need to get the social conservatives out of office who have launched the war on women. We know that these attacks have united our supporters, and women voters will make the difference this election. **President Barack Obama** and **Senator Debbie Stabenow** have stood strong for Planned Par-

enthood, and now we will make sure our supporters stand strong for them and pro-choice candidates all the way down the ticket. Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan is **targeting 10 seats** in the Michigan House of Representatives to take control back from the social conservatives who threaten

We must stand with the candidates who support women's health!

our values. PPAM will contact 100,000 voters in 2012 to elect candidates who will end the war on women. Our **Students for Choice** groups and campus advocates are ready to talk to their peers where they are—on Facebook, by text, on campus, and with our new mobile candidate guide app—to get out the youth vote. We know that women and younger voters are strong in their support for Planned Parenthood and candidates that share our values. Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan is ready to make sure our supporters remember to vote for candidates who will stand with us in November. ■

Students For Choice Take On Michigan Legislators

More than 30 college students from eight different campuses assembled in Lansing on March 27 for the **2012 Students for Choice Lobby Day** to educate their legislators about the issues that affect college women the most. The day began with a press conference held by the **Michigan Democratic Women's Caucus**, where **Representative Marcia Hovey-Wright**, **Senator Rebekah Warren**, and our very own campus leader, **Marcia LeVigne**, spoke about the recent political attacks on women, the significance of access to birth control without co-pays, and the importance of the **Prevention First Package**.

After receiving a legislative update and lobbying training, students paired up to meet politicians who needed to hear why reproductive justice is important to their constituents. The students explained the important and essential work they do on campus, the negative consequences of anti-choice legislation, and the positive results attributed to passing pro-active prevention-based policies. Students delivered information to all Michigan legislators about the benefits of prevention-based legislation included in the **Prevention First Package** that would reduce unintended pregnancies and encourage healthy women and families.

After their legislative visits, two guest speakers came to talk to the students about the political climate in Michigan. **State Representative and House Minority Whip Vicki Barnett** spoke to the students about the severity of the attacks on

women's health. Rep. Barnett had students on the edge of their seats and laughing as she talked about her past, how she deals with anti-choice legislators in the House, and the importance of electing more pro-choice policy makers. The students also heard from **Shelli Weisberg, the Legislative Director of the Michigan ACLU**, regarding the importance of strong relationships and coalition building in Lansing. The day provided a great educational experience for our students, staff and legislators. ■

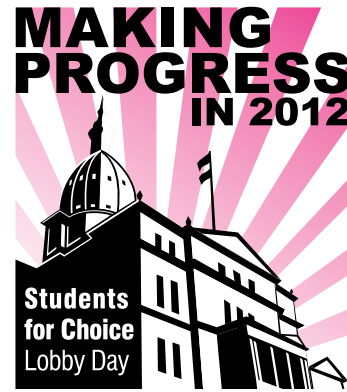
Lobby Day Participants Rave!

"I love hearing women leaders fighting the good fight!"

"We didn't know what to expect from the meeting, but once we were in, we were confident in what we knew."

"You guys help us out so much with staying up to date on legislation and preparing us to talk to these leaders! It's wonderful!"

"The speakers were entertaining, informative, inspirational."



At the press conference: (left to right) Rep. Joan Bauer, Rep. Ellen Cogen Lipton, Marcia LeVigne, Rep. Marcia Hovey-Wright, Sen. Rebekah Warren.



John Keserich, PPAM Director of Political Field Operations, trains our youth advocates to lobby their legislators.



Michigan State Capitol

Addressing Health Disparities in Michigan

On March 28 and March 29, 2012, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan held a campus tour in which the team traveled throughout the state to different college campuses to bring together community leaders, public health experts, and women's health advocates to discuss the health disparities among women of color that result from a lack of access to quality, affordable health care services.

The 48-hour-long campus tour "**Addressing the Disparity: The Affordable Care Act, Women, and Communities of Color**" took place at **Wayne State University**, **Michigan State University**, and the **University of Michigan**. Each stop on the tour began with a presentation by a panel of eight different experts on health care and the disparities experienced by different communities including Arab Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans.

After the panel, participants received training on the **Affordable Care Act** presented by **Michigan Consumers for Healthcare** and participated in small group discussions facilitated by university students. Attendees were given the opportunity to share their personal stories and plan how they will educate the public and share the information they learned in their communities.

Each event included a special movie screening of *A Vital Service: African-American Stories of Reproductive Health Care*. The documentary features personal stories from women and families who have benefitted

from having access to the critical health services offered at Planned Parenthood health centers. Participants and facilitators alike left the tour with a greater understanding of health care disparities in different communities and the importance of access to quality and affordable health care services. ■



Campus tour participants learned how the Affordable Care Act affects women and communities of color.

ADDRESSING THE DISPARITY: The Affordable Care Act, Women, and Communities of Color



The panel of presenters included:

State Representative Maureen Stapleton
Destiny Lopez, Director of Latino Engagement, Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Anika Fassia, Policy Analyst, Michigan League for Human Services
Trudy Hall, Program Manager, UMHS Program for Multicultural Health
Emily Sorroche, Native American Outreach Advocate, Ingham County Health Department
Julea Ferrara, President, J. Ferrara Consulting Solutions, LLC
Cleothia Frazier, MPH, Program in Public Health Instructor, MSU School of Public Health

Mona Farroukh, Domestic Violence Prevention Coordinator, Arab Community Center for Economic & Social Services (ACCESS)

Jennifer Mendez, PhD, Assistant Professor and Director, Co-Curricular Programs Wayne State University School of Medicine

Each panel was moderated by Desiree Cooper, Director of Community and Media Relations, Planned Parenthood Mid and South Michigan

Our presentation partners included:

Michigan Consumer for Healthcare
MichUHCAN
KnowYourCare
ACCESS Community Health & Research Center
UMSH Program for Multicultural Health
J. Ferrara Consulting Solutions, LLC
Law Students for Reproductive Justice, WSU Chapter
MSU Students for Choice
U of M Students for Choice