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Advocates of Michigan

PO Box 15041, Lansing, MI 48901-5041

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## Cecile Richards Lunches with Michigan Supporters

On April 12, 2013, Cecile Richards, President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, joined PPAM in Troy to show support for our statewide advocacy efforts in Michigan. PPAM President Lori Lamerand introduced Cecile Richards, noting her unwavering leadership in the face of continued attacks at the national level and in states throughout the country. Cecile addressed event attendees and thanked them for their past and continued support to Planned Parenthood and the services that we provide.

Through the support of our generous sponsors, students and young professionals were able to write inspiring essays on what Planned Parenthood means to them and earn an invitation to the sold-out luncheon and a special conversation with Cecile.

While Michigan legislators continue to politicize women's health, our dedicated supporters and the leadership of Cecile Richards ensure that Planned Parenthood Ad-

vocates of Michigan is able to stand up for the 90,000 women, men, and teens who count on us for essentially health care services. ■



PPFA President Cecile Richards met with students and young professionals during her April visit to Michigan.

# MICHIGAN'S CHOICE

The Newsletter of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan



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PO Box 15041, Lansing, MI 48901 | 517.482.1080 phone | ppam@ppmchoice.org | www.MiPlannedParenthood.org

## Women's Lives Matter: Stop the Attacks on Women's Health

In the latest attack on women's health care, an initiative petition has been launched to prevent private health insurance companies from covering abortion. Any abortion coverage would have to be offered through a separate, optional abortion rider. Today the majority of health plans cover abortion services.

**This is an end-run around democracy in Michigan.** Its proponents are trying to go around Governor Snyder and the will of the

majority of Michigan voters. Two Republican governors have already vetoed this legislation. If passed by the legislature, the proposal would not be subject to the governor's veto or a vote of the people.

The proposal deceptively implies that tax dollars are somehow involved in private insurance for abortion. NO federal, state, or local tax dollars pay for abortions in Michigan—it's already the law. The petition has nothing to do with how

abortions are funded. It is about who decides what should or should not be covered by someone's personal health plan. **It would have legislators replace the judgment of women, their families, their faith, their health care provider, and their private insurers.**

The first step in the process was approval of the petition by the Board of Canvassers. Seventy-five Planned Parenthood supporters packed the meeting to capacity in solidarity against the initiative. Beforehand, volunteers were joined by women's health champions Senators Gretchen Whitmer and Rebekah Warren to reinforce how important it is to defeat this proposal.

PPAM is launching a statewide Decline to Sign campaign to defeat the proposal. If its proponents do not collect the required 258,088 valid signatures by the fall, this measure will be defeated again. With our dedicated supporters, we will get the message out in the media, online, in the community, and at the doors that this proposal goes too far. Nearly two-thirds of Michiganders think this is outrageous.

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Planned Parenthood volunteers joined with Senator Gretchen Whitmer and Senator Rebekah Warren to voice opposition to the continued legislative attacks on women's health care.

## Stop the Attacks on Women's Health

*Continued from page 1*

It is government intrusion in a private industry. The government should not be allowed to dictate to the private sector what type of insurance coverage can be offered to private customers. Mandating that businesses cannot contract to cover abortions for rape victims, incest victims, and women who face health risks is an unwarranted intrusion on the marketplace and a threat to women's health.

This government intrusion on women's health care would require women to buy a rider to cover their health costs in case they ever become victims of a crime like rape or incest or face a serious health challenge while pregnant. This proposal could leave a woman and her family facing a severe fetal abnormality or seeking cancer treatment with the added stress of figuring out how to pay for the medical care she needs—even though she has insurance.

When asked about requiring an optional rider for cases of rape, one proponent equated it to buying flood or car insurance by saying "no one plans to have a car accident or their homes flooded... but you must buy extra insurance for those things too". Rape is not an accident, it is a crime. Women deserve comprehensive care that will cover all of their health care when they need it.

**We are dedicated to making sure this legislative effort fails. The privacy and best interests of women's health must be maintained—no matter what! ■**



*Flint's Peer Educators met with Senator Jim Ananich in Lansing while attending the Leadership Conference and Lobby Day in April.*

## College and High School Students Build Leadership and Educating Skills

On February 16, 2013, more than 60 college students and activists gathered together in Ann Arbor for **PPAM's 2013 Annual Students for Choice Conference: Growing the Movement; Building our Power**. Students for Choice members from eight colleges and universities worked together in their campus groups to develop organizing and leadership skills. Student's advanced their leadership skills through proven tactics to build power and community and achieve their goals on campus. Students continued building relationships with their peers, both on their individual campuses and on campuses across the state. Break-out sessions focused on fundraising, event planning, member recruitment and retention, and several other topics common to groups statewide. Students for Choice groups developed the skills they need to educate

their peers on the importance of reproductive health and LGBTQ rights on campus.

On April 10, 2013, **Planned Parenthood Peer Educators** packed their leadership conference and lobby day into a one-day affair in Lansing. More than 60 high school students from around the state held energizing and engaging sessions on advocacy and leadership. Students met with their legislators about the importance of comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education and access to health care and information for youth in local communities. Lunch featured an inspiring conversation with **State Senator Jim Ananich** (D-Flint) and a question and answer period about policies on comprehensive sex education, gun violence, and education in Michigan. ■

## "Healthy Neighborhood" Canvass Enrolls Detroit Residents in Health Care Programs

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Michigan is leading the charge to sign residents up for health care coverage. Michigan was selected by **Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA)** to launch a pilot program in Detroit that will serve as the model for affiliates across the country to enroll people for health care coverage under the **Affordable Care Act (ACA)**.

In a few months, millions of Americans will become newly eligible for health insurance. We are dedicated to making sure people have access to essential health care services, and the first step is to sign them up for coverage. As a health care provider, Planned Parenthood is a trusted source of information which enables us to engage the communities we serve around the implementation of the ACA.

PPAM was selected to pilot a large-scale **Healthy Neighborhood canvass program** with 20

full-time neighborhood canvassers and a project coordinator from April to June in Detroit. Neighborhoods were selected that will have a high density of newly eligible recipients of health care coverage. PPAM educated, engaged, and enrolled eligible individuals into **Plan First!**, Michigan's Family Planning Waiver as a model of how we can enroll newly eligible residents for full health care coverage under the ACA beginning in October.

The Healthy Neighborhood canvassers knocked on the doors of more than 60,000 women who likely qualify for Plan First!. During those conversations, individuals were offered information about Plan First! and the opportunity to enroll online and on the spot through the use of tablet technology. They also received information about the availability of services in all four of our metro Detroit health centers and were given the opportunity to sign a post card

in support of Medicaid expansion. Additionally, Healthy Neighborhood canvassers engaged people in high traffic areas, such as stores or community centers, and attended health and community services fairs. This project had a positive impact on Plan First! enrollment rates in Detroit and patient recruitment for all four of our metro Detroit health centers and identified supporters in the city of Detroit.

Thanks to the dedicated supporters of our advocacy work, PPAM had the field infrastructure and experience in effective and impactful outreach to diverse communities that made this program possible. The Healthy Neighborhood pilot program was a huge success, and we were able to deliver a model for PPFA to launch efforts in communities across the nation. Affiliates will be looking to Michigan and our proven track-record to prepare for implementation of health care reform. ■

