

FROM THE CEO

Throughout this newsletter, you'll read about the resilience and resourcefulness of the Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, proving that at PPM, our doors stay open, no matter what.

While our health centers had to limit in-person visits to only urgent services for the first few months of the pandemic, the clinic teams worked hard to increase telehealth services, ensuring that our patients could still receive the health care they needed. As we carefully reintroduce more in-person health care services, PPM's health centers are implementing ways to protect patients and practice social distancing whenever possible.

I'm proud to share that since our full renovation in Annapolis earlier this year, PPM has expanded our two health centers in Baltimore County. The Towson health center relocated in June to a larger facility on LaSalle Road and the Owings Mills health center opened its new location at the end of September. Both facilities offer more space to accommodate more services, patients, and social distancing. PPM's expansion of both health centers will decrease wait times for appointments and allow us to meet our growing patient population in Baltimore County. Across the state the demand for our services continues and we are so grateful for our donors that have maintained or increased their giving to support our expansion efforts.

This newsletter will also highlight our innovative and creative education team. This past summer, PPM's education staff created several new trainings and implemented new technology to continue their work providing comprehensive sexuality education to teens and adults. As schools and communities continue to navigate COVID-19, PPM's education team will be working with them to ensure the education they provide can be accessible and attainable for all.

Lastly, our advocacy team has been operating in unprecedented times. PPM has always prioritized our work in Annapolis and throughout Maryland to promote pro-reproductive health care policies, as well as the importance of voting as a way to protect those policies. You can learn more about those activities in our "Advocacy" article.

Although we do not know what the future holds, I know I can trust in your support and the caring professionalism of our staff. Together, we will keep access to reproductive health care and education available to all who need it.



Thank you for your support!

Karen J. Nelson

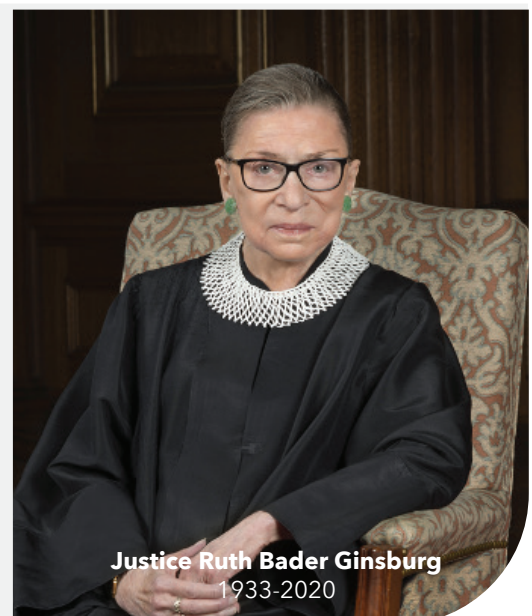
Karen J. Nelson

We thank her. We honor her legacy. We continue her work.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a fierce champion for gender equality, reproductive rights, LGBTQ+ freedom, and health care for all. She carried the weight of the unheard and overlooked, and we are forever grateful.

Justice Ginsburg's passing is a loss to us all, but we must honor her by continuing her legacy and ensuring the all people have the right to control their own bodies, lives, and futures.

To the great Notorious RBG, we say thank you for your lifetime of service to PPM patients and everyone in this country. May your memory be a blessing, may your memory be a revolution.



Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg
1933-2020

HEALTH CARE

Expanding Access to Medication Abortion, No Matter What

2020 has been a year of both growth and challenges for Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM). As we navigate through a global pandemic, we have kept our doors open and introduced new programs and spaces to safely meet our patients' health care needs. We reopened three health centers in larger locations, added care coordination, introduced gender affirming care across Maryland via telehealth and in-person appointments at select health centers, and now we are in the process of expanding medication abortion access and care throughout our centers.

Medication abortion is an increasingly preferred method of abortion for our patients - in fact, it now represents more than half of the abortions provided across our health centers in Maryland. Given a few factors, including patient interest and demand, along with legislative advances regarding medication abortion provision, PPM has been able to greatly increase the number of days and health center locations our patients are able to access this service. We have doubled the number of days medication abortion is available since 2019 and six of our seven centers currently provide this service at least one day per week, with our seventh to ideally launch in 2021.

Access matters. Being able to receive the abortion method you choose, in the location that works best for you, is critical to our commitment of providing high-quality, compassionate care without undue burden or barriers.

ADVOCACY

Protect Access to Reproductive Health Care in Maryland, No Matter What

This past year, as mentioned in our last issue of ACCESS, Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) was successful in supporting the passage of an emergency bill which broadens the scope of telehealth delivery in Maryland. Thanks to our champions in Annapolis, people in Maryland continue to progress in their reproductive health care access. As we prepare for the 2021 legislative session, we look at opportunities to not just further reproductive rights but also respond to anti-choice legislation. In this past Maryland Legislative Session alone, ten bills were introduced that sought to limit access to reproductive health care.

The pandemic has affected voter registration all over the country and PPM's voter registration efforts have moved online and through mobile devices. Voting has been and will continue to be vital to ensuring access to reproductive health care for all. While 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, the adoption of the 19th Amendment did not address the various laws that systemically barred Black citizens from accessing the ballot. And, as we all know, a right

So what is Medication Abortion?



Medication abortion – also called the abortion pill – is a safe and effective way to end an early pregnancy. It works through the use of two different medications, mifepristone and misoprostol. Mifepristone blocks your body's own progesterone, stopping the pregnancy from growing. Misoprostol, taken either right away or up to 48 hours later, causes cramping and bleeding to empty your uterus. The abortion pill is very effective and can be provided up to 11 weeks after the first day of your last period.

Myth-Bust: Medication abortion is NOT the same as emergency contraception, or the "morning after pill" which is birth control you can use to prevent pregnancy up to 5 days (120 hours) after unprotected sex. However, it is most effective within the first 3 days (72 hours).

To learn more about medication abortion or schedule an appointment, visit www.ppm.care.



is only meaningful if you have the ability to access it. Many still face hurdles when trying to participate in the political process because of discriminatory voter suppression laws. We know this will not change until our elected officials are committed to dismantling systemic racism. It is vital that we reach as many people as possible so that their voices can be counted in every election and legislative session.

Every vote matters. We need your voice, from local council to state and federal elections. You have the ability to make a difference in the lives of PPM patients.

For more information on PPM advocacy efforts contact VP of Public Affairs, Jay Hutchins, at jay.hutchins@ppm.care.

FEATURE

Expanding to Meet Patient Need

Over the past 15 years, our patient base has nearly doubled. And even with this growth we still face unmet patient demand. At the same time that we are experiencing demand within our community, we are participating in national contingency planning for abortion care services in case potential restrictions in surrounding states lead to increased demand from outside our service area.

We also know that we are the only health care provider that many of our patients see - and they often need care beyond our current scope of services. We are planning to expand our current sexual and reproductive health care services, assist with insurance referrals, and even phase in limited primary care services to our core patient base.

To meet our demand and provide and expand the care that our patients are seeking and rely upon, we have been and will continue to need to invest in our clinical staffing and in growing our current facilities. And now, with the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to allow for greater patient distancing and flow throughout their health care visits, which makes upgraded and enlarged facilities even more important.

We thank our early donors to our Expansion Campaign who increased their annual gift and/or made a multi-year commitment to support these efforts. Their support was critical in the expansion of our Annapolis, Towson, and Owings Mills health centers and launch of new programs to better serve our patients.



We are still in need of support during this growth, especially as we've been navigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you'd like to learn more about our expansion efforts or explore an increased or multi-year commitment, please contact Shelly Terranova at shelly.terranova@ppm.care.

Expansion Campaign Donors

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EDUCATION

New Challenges Bring New Opportunities

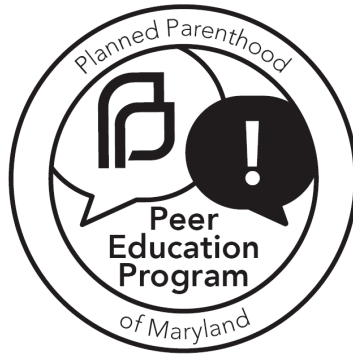
Despite the limitations the COVID-19 pandemic imposes on traditional learning classrooms, sexuality health education remains vital. Our education team at Planned Parenthood of Maryland (PPM) is rising to the challenge and safely providing comprehensive, medically accurate information to youth and adults throughout the state.

Now more than ever, our communities need the tools and information to protect our health and prioritize our collective wellbeing. Through virtual trainings, videos, and other creative solutions, PPM educators continue to empower students and adults through lessons covering birth control, healthy relationships, and beyond. In May and June alone, PPM educators facilitated 25 virtual trainings to over 630 adult and professionals.

This August, 19 students from 14 high schools in Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, and Harford County completed PPM's Peer Education program training to become Peer Educators in their communities. The training is normally a 2-week in person intensive session, but this year we transferred the program to a virtual space. Using Zoom and IdeaBoardz to facilitate small groups and interactive participation, our education team provided the teen Peer Educators with the tools they need to be reliable resources to their friends and classmates.

As the school year begins and we adapt to the new reality of distanced learning, we are partnering with schools to administer virtual sexuality education programs that encourage active participation. Our educators are ready to teach, guide, and inspire Maryland to make healthy decisions, even amid a public health crisis.

For more information on PPM's virtual trainings, please contact PPM's Education Manager, Lindsay Roemer, at lindsay.roemer@ppm.care.



We're Here With You.



Get in touch with us for professional development, workshops, parent education resources - please email vanessa.geffrard@ppm.care for more information



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