

Letter from our CEO and Medical Director

In this newsletter we showcase what we love to do and do best at Planned Parenthood Northern California (PPNorCal): provide excellent comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care to all. Our work is both timely and critical; California holds the dubious distinction of having the highest total number of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the country, including chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, and congenital syphilis.

These infections disproportionately affect, and have negative outcomes for women and for people of color. We are dedicated at PPNorCal to caring for people who cannot or do not receive care elsewhere. We work to ensure that every person we serve is empowered to make the best decisions about their fertility, their family, and their future.

It is impossible to separate the work that we do from reproductive justice. At a time when the rights and freedoms of so many different groups are being threatened, we strive to offer services that meet the diverse needs of our patients, regardless of race, gender identity, economic status, or geography. Reproductive justice is inextricably linked to other social and economic justice issues. We stand together with those fighting for immigrant rights, economic and environmental justice, as well as LGBTQ protections.

We will continue to fight for the rights and the health of the patients who need us the most.

We also send our best wishes to everyone directly impacted by Northern California's devastating fires. We are very grateful that all staff members, clients and supporters are safe. We worked swiftly to get health center services back up and running to care for our communities in the immediate fire area. Our patients come to us at some of the most vulnerable moments in life. We always have and will continue to find a way to care for our patients regardless of the challenge we face.

Thank you for your support during this difficult and crucial time.

Sincerely,



Gilda Gonzales
President & CEO
Planned Parenthood Northern California



Sara Kennedy
Medical Director, MD, MPH
Planned Parenthood Northern California



SF Flagship Building Update!

We are happy to share with you that Planned Parenthood Northern California's Board of Trustees authorized the purchase of a building just off Van Ness in San Francisco to serve as our new Flagship Health Center! Along the way, we reached out to you and you responded, with many expressing support for this project. The incredible outpouring of support in large part, helped us reach this phase of our goal to create a new San Francisco home. If you are interested in making a gift to support the PPNorCal Flagship in San Francisco, contact info@ppnorcal.org for more information.

Feature Story

One Day at Planned Parenthood: Our Concord Health Center

by A.C., Reproductive Health Specialist

When I got to work on this particular day, there was already a line outside our door before we opened. Some of those waiting had an appointment and others were hoping to be squeezed in. We see an average of 59 patients per day and still, our schedule can be booked out for days, or even weeks, making my job as coordinator challenging. Turning a patient away can sometimes mean closing the only door to health care that person has.

Also, on this day we scheduled a block of prenatal appointments. We see an average of 20 patients per session. Pregnant women who have insurance through Medi-Cal (state public insurance) have limited options for prenatal care in Contra Costa County. Caring for pregnant people, with the goal of making healthier families, is a cherished part of our mission, and one that surprises some people. A patient for family planning may initially present for infertility concerns and then undergo some testing, diagnosis, and basic treatment when necessary. She may visit again for a pregnancy test, ultrasound, and/or options counseling during our afternoon family planning services. Postpartum, she may return to start contraception and to receive cervical and breast cancer screenings. In Concord, we make it as easy as possible for patients to have access to these services, that they might otherwise be unable to access.

We serve a wide range of patients with a variety of needs. Other services offered at PPNorCal include: medication abortion, surgical abortion, gender-affirming hormone therapy, vasectomy, mental and behavioral health, well-person visits, immunizations, and midlife and menopause services.

One such patient is "M", a 29-year-old woman with abnormal vaginal discharge. We are fortunate that many of our clinicians and staff members speak fluent Spanish. So we were able to clearly communicate with M regarding her circumstances. She lost her insurance three years ago which caused an inability to follow up on a previous abnormal pap smear result at another health care provider. Our clinician provided her a new pap smear. The diagnosis indicated that she had a precancerous cervical lesion, she was then referred to a PPNorCal physician for treatment. She was also diagnosed with gonorrhea, and both she and her new partner received treatment. M is just one of many patients who walks into our Concord health center scared and unsure, and able to leave healthier and empowered with the knowledge of what is going on with their bodies.

Fast Facts in Concord

- Range of number of patients seen daily: 45-75
- Patient visits covered by Medi-Cal: 89%
- Patients at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level for 2017 (\$49,200 for family of four): 93%
- Number of patients who identify as male: 12%
- Patients who are 20-29 years old: 50%
- Patients over 40 years old: 11%

GONORRHEA - DID YOU KNOW?

STD rates in California are the highest they have been in 25 years. Between 2011 and 2015, the infection rate for **gonorrhea** has doubled. Gonorrhea is caused by an infection with *Neisseria Gonorrhoeae*, a bacterium that infects the mucous membranes of the genitals, urethra, rectum, mouth, throat, and eyes. Each year, 78 million people worldwide are infected by gonorrhea, and antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea infections are on the rise. Widespread resistance to the most common and least expensive antibiotics has been reported by 77 countries, with some strains of gonorrhea that are resistant to *all* known antibiotics.

Gonorrhea is transmitted through sexual contact and can also be transmitted perinatally from mother to fetus during childbirth, causing blindness, joint infection, sepsis, and death. Complications of gonorrhea disproportionately affect women, including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), ectopic pregnancy and infertility, as well as an increased risk of HIV infection. If left untreated, gonorrhea can also spread to the blood and cause life-threatening disseminated gonococcal infection, characterized by arthritis, tenosynovitis, and/or dermatitis.

We screen for and treat gonorrhea in all of our health centers.
www.ppnorcal.org

Feature Story (cont'd)

One Day at Planned Parenthood: Our Concord Health Center

by F.S., Reproductive Health Specialist



As a gay Salvadoran-American, providing compassionate care to queer patients is my passion. Last year, in Contra Costa County alone, 120 individuals were newly infected with HIV. Of these individuals, the vast majority identified as LGBTQIA. (You can read more about HIV in Contra Costa County [here](#).) This burden of STDs that is carried among queer individuals, especially those from communities of color, is visible at PPNorCal. These statistics are startling and they represent a real struggle patients face.

When I first started working at PPNorCal, I met an uninsured patient who visited our clinic for a screening test. I learned that his current sexual partner was HIV positive and that they seldom used condoms. As we discussed his risk of HIV infection, I brought up the possibility of initiating pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP). PrEP is a medication that patients at high risk of HIV infection can take to prevent transmission. While he was open to the idea of starting the medication, he feared not being able to afford PrEP because of his insurance status. I assured him that he had options, and I helped connect him to an assistance program that would pay for the cost of the medication.

Over the past year, he has adhered to the PrEP regimen and has remained HIV negative. As a health care professional, this experience is one of my most memorable. He came to PPNorCal feeling powerless, but left with resources that left him feeling in control of his health. This is part of our commitment to addressing the health needs of medically-underserved communities. Our health centers have been on the forefront of increasing access to PrEP services for our LGBTQIA patients. We offer these services routinely to our patients, and on our best weeks, have a patient initiating PrEP every day of the week. Patients deserve services that help them live free from HIV, and each one that visits and takes measures to protect themselves, brings us closer to an AIDS-free generation.

SYPHILIS - DID YOU KNOW?

Syphilis is an STD that is acquired through direct contact with a syphilis sore during vaginal, anal, or oral sex. Syphilis is divided into stages (primary, secondary, latent, and tertiary), with different signs and symptoms associated with each stage. Untreated syphilis can cause an infection of the brain and other organs as well as death. Syphilis can spread from an infected mother to the fetus, causing 40% of these babies to be stillborn, or die from the infection as a newborn.

California is experiencing a sharp increase in the number of syphilis infections not seen since the early 1990s. Between 2014 and 2015, there was a 27% increase in the number of cases of primary and secondary syphilis, and a 39% increase in the number of cases of congenital syphilis, with preliminary 2016 data demonstrating continuing sharp increases in the number of infections. Overall, sexually transmitted diseases are at an **all time high**.

Today, it is easy to see that public health and race are interconnected. Nationally, African American communities disproportionately bear the burden of chlamydia, gonorrhea and syphilis infections. Black men ages 24-29 years have the highest rate of syphilis infection, a rate that is seven times the rate in white men. Congenital syphilis in African American infants is almost eight times the rate in white infants. These disparities can be explained in part by limited access to testing services and treatment among these communities. You can see more statistics about these disparities [here](#).

We screen and treat for syphilis in all of our health centers, and were one of the first Planned Parenthood affiliates to do so.

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TUSKEGEE SYPHILIS STUDY

From 1932 to 1972, the U.S. Public Health Service recruited over 600 sharecroppers in Alabama to participate in an infamous clinical study called *"The Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male"*. The men were told that they were being treated for "bad blood" but they were not told that the real purpose of the study was to assess the progression of untreated syphilis in African-American men.

Researchers withheld treatment from these men and failed to inform them that there were treatment options available for syphilis. By the end of the study, over 100 men had died from syphilis or related complications, and 19 children had developed congenital syphilis. You can read more about this study [here](#).

Fundraising Updates

Second Century Campaign

Last fall began the celebration of our national centennial anniversary at Planned Parenthood. Our local Second Century Campaign was launched at the same time, with a primary goal of establishing a new flagship site to meet the growing demand for our health care services in San Francisco. Part of this vision is to also further activate our other work: such as research, education and advocacy.



As of this writing, PPNorCal has raised a significant amount toward our \$50MM comprehensive campaign goal. With the generosity of our donors, we were able to purchase an ideal building just off Van Ness in San Francisco in late August. We have another \$5 million to raise to begin renovation for this new San Francisco Flagship. We envision it as a safe and highly functional health center, where patient wait times will be greatly reduced and serve at least twice as many patients. For information about how you can help this become a reality with your gift, contact: info@ppnorcal.org.

Pop-Up Support

Since January of 2017, supporters of Planned Parenthood Northern California have hosted over 100 events which have served as "pop up" fundraisers - ranging from "RESIST" jewelry sales, film showings, paint events, and aerobic classes, to comedy shows.

These pop ups are actions of solidarity - aimed to defend and support Planned Parenthood from attacks in the current environment. Thank you Planned Parenthood community! To learn more contact: info@ppnorcal.org.



(Images from Left to Right) Contra Costa NOW hosted "Paint Nite", Tiffany Butler with VOLT FITNESS hosted "Power to the P", Nine Lives Creations has been providing donors with "Pussy Hats" at rallies and marches.

Tech Community Supports Planned Parenthood Northern California

Our Innovation and Technology Advisory Board (ITAB) is hosting a San Francisco fundraising event on November 7th, with food, wine/craft beer, live music, a DJ, and a keynote speaker from our Medical Services Leadership Team. Future events are planned for other professional communities in the upcoming year. For information about attending the ITAB event on November 7th or helping with other future events, contact info@ppnorcal.org.

Fundraising Updates (cont'd)

New Vallejo Health Center!



We are pleased to report that our former *Access for All (AFA)* campaign has come to completion with the opening of our new Vallejo Health Center. Located at 303 Sacramento Street, we have already started to see patients at this new location. Planned Parenthood Northern California extends our gratitude to Melody Howe Weintraub and Stacey Bressler for co-chairing the AFA campaign which helped us complete the remodeling of two health care centers for our patients in San Rafael and now Vallejo! We thank everyone who donated to the AFA campaign.

GIFT FROM THE HEART



Ann C. Taylor is on a mission. Years ago, Ann's best friend was diagnosed with breast cancer and sadly lost her battle. Since then, Ann sought to learn more about Planned Parenthood Northern California's (PPNorCal) Breast Health services. During her occasional visits to the Walnut Creek and San Ramon health centers she talked with clinicians and is impressed with PPNorCal's work in early stage cancer screening and prevention. While she supports the entire range of family planning services annually, it's the Breast Health services that particularly speaks to her. With Ann's generous philanthropic support, we have provided referrals and case management to patients, as well as disseminated breast brochures in the health centers. PPNorCal provides breast exams as part of our health care services, and with Ann's support we have referred many patients with no other resources to pay for breast screening, diagnostic imaging, ultrasounds, biopsies and breast cancer treatment services.

When a 24 year old Walnut Creek patient came to us for her annual well person exam recently, the clinician identified breast masses. We referred her for a breast ultrasound. There are few breast health programs to support low-income women under 40 to pursue further services. The patient was able to schedule an appointment and get seen without a huge expense with the support of our Breast Health Program. She said that the program was easy to access and is very appreciative since she realized that it may have saved her life.



Over the past year 160 patients have been supported through this program with all having positive outcomes. We are so fortunate to have Ann's support - it is helping us save the lives of many.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Early detection & screening is Key—and It Is **Not Just for Women**. To learn more about PPNorCal's many preventive health care services, visit our website at www.ppnorcal.org.

Straight from the Source

We're always listening and learning from our patients. Here are a few comments!

"My utmost praise to Planned Parenthood for the work all its employees do. The services offered and the warm, informative, transparent and protective attitude in which they are given are an endangered national treasure."
Patient, El Cerrito

"Staff and doctors were very professional and caring. I would recommend to anybody who asks me about."
Patient, San Ramon

"Very supportive staff. The procedure was painful, but the medical assistant held my hand the whole time."
Patient, Santa Rosa

"It was a fast and great service. Keep up the great service!"
Patient, Vallejo

"Everything went smoothly! The staff were all so nice and caring! Had such a great, positive first experience!"
Patient, San Francisco

Cheers and Jeers



Who We Are



This month has reminded us of our core values at Planned Parenthood Northern California.

We hold ourselves to high standards of inclusion and acceptance of each other and everyone that we serve. We are in this together and we care for each other.

We extend our thoughts and best wishes to all those impacted by recent events including the heartbreaking announcement from this administration on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

We stand with the 800,000 Dreamers and immigrant youth who put their trust in our government. It is the right thing to do -- they are our patients, family members, co-workers, friends, and neighbors.

For more information and resources related to DACA visit United We Dream at <http://weareheretostay.org/resources>.



Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs



In August, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) shortened the grant period for the evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, and we anticipate further attempts by the Trump administration and conservatives in Congress to increase funding for Abstinence Only Until Marriage (AOUM) programs (now referred to as "sexual risk avoidance" programs).

Credible scientific research highlights significant problems with so-called AOUM programs: They are ineffective and they violate a basic human right to accurate health information, stigmatize or exclude many young people, and reinforce damaging gender stereotypes.

The Journal of Adolescent Health published a position paper on AOUM programs and their negative impact on young people by the Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM). The SAHM [position paper](#) and literature review are important new tools that outline why AOUM programs do not serve the needs of young people and elevate the importance of sex education overall – including the high-quality education programs that Planned Parenthood affiliates provide.

What's the Difference When I Give?

Planned Parenthood Northern California and Planned Parenthood Federation of America

We are often asked what happens when you give to Planned Parenthood Northern California versus the Federation. We wanted to share with you the following guide to avoid any possible confusion.

If you want to give to [Planned Parenthood Northern California](#) directly, and have all of your gift go to local health care and education services to better the lives of people across 20 counties in Northern California...

then you need to go to our affiliate website (support.ppnorcal.org) where 100% of your donation is directed to services right here, in Northern California.

If you go to Planned Parenthood Federation of America's national website...

then only 50% of your gift will support health services and education here in Northern California and the other 50% of your gift will support national advocacy and education efforts.

Two ways to support our mission to protect health care, education, and justice. No matter what!

Legacies for Future Generations

A strong Legacy Giving program is a key success measure of our Second Century Campaign. We have an ambitious five-year goal, and we're pleased to head into our second year, securing our future. Thank you to our donors for naming us in their estate plans – and ensuring health care and access for generations to come.

By partnering with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America through the Bequest Challenge, we were able to deepen our Legacy Giving program, while receiving \$340,000 in matching grants to support our programs *today*. To learn more about our program, contact Tara Arnold at (925) 887-5385 or tarnold@ppnorcal.org.



Support Planned Parenthood Northern California! Make an appointment online, connect to community, and get involved!



Planned Parenthood Northern California



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