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CHOICE *Remarks*

 Upper Hudson
Planned Parenthood[®]

259 Lark Street, Albany, NY 12210

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SAVE THE DATE: January 12, 2009
Women's Health Matters: A Day of Action

The State Capitol Building Albany, N.Y. | 11:00am - 3:30pm

 Join UHPP as we greet the new state legislators and
 lay out our legislative priorities for 2009.

**For more info go to www.uhpp.org
 or call 434-5678 x 133.**
ARE YOU A WEB CRUISER?
Do you read blogs?
Do you check up on women-focused web sites?
Do you like to track our opposition online?

 If so, we invite you to join other pro-choice activists from
 our area who would like to see the UHPP mission and
 the pro-choice perspective reflected more often online.

Contact Blue at blue@uhpp.org to get involved.
HOPE FOR CHANGE ! *continued from page 1*

In fact, the election has brought breathing room to the embattled movement for reproductive health and justice—but not an end to the struggle. In New York, a new Democratic majority in the Senate brings hope that legislation for comprehensive sex education in our schools can move forward and that our laws will be updated to withstand any federal attacks on *Roe*. But the economic crisis threatens our ability to provide affordable services and we must begin immediately to convince legislators that in hard times, family planning services are a lifeline for women and families.

Nationally, members of the Supreme Court are split down the middle on issues of reproductive health and justice, with Justice Kennedy often holding the swing vote. Kennedy has indicated a willingness to consider and approve almost any restriction on abortion access, short of overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

In this new environment, we ask our supporters to celebrate with us, take a deep breath of fresh air, and then renew our commitment to ensuring access to reproductive health and choice for all.

NEWSLETTER OPTION ONLINE

In keeping with our efforts to "green" our organization, UHPP is making our newsletter available online. If you would like to receive your newsletter via email, please check the box in the enclosed envelope, and get ready to help us save paper, save postage, and go green!

Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood will not sell, rent, or release your email address to any other business or organization, in keeping with our policies.

CHOICE *Remarks*

A Publication of Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood

Serving Albany, Columbia, Greene and Rensselaer Counties

HOPE FOR CHANGE!

Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood staff, clients and supporters celebrated, along with millions of people across the state and country, the historic results of the 2008 election.

“There was an odd kind of quiet in the air...” observed a member of our management team, “almost as if we were all waiting for someone to pinch us, to see if we were dreaming. What so many of us fought so hard to make happen, really did—in so many different election races. What a sense of relief, celebration, hope and change!”

“I am really excited,” shared a young man in our Albany waiting room. I believe Obama will start to address inequality, improve our healthcare system and get us out of Iraq.”

“I believe things will start to get better for people who are struggling—to pay their mortgages, to afford health care, shared a clinician. It will take time, but things will get better.”

“For this agency, and for the cause of reproductive justice, I think the Obama theme says it all,” shared another management team member. **“Yes, we can!”**

UHPP staff and supporters did their part to turn out the vote, distributing hundreds of voter registration packets at health centers and community events. Many volunteered for local candidates or for the local Planned Parenthood Advocates of New York, Upper Hudson chapter which interviewed, endorsed and worked to elect pro-choice candidates.

Our service area is now represented by pro-choice leaders in the White House and in both halls of Congress. President-elect Obama has publicly defended the right to reproductive choice and advocated personally for comprehensive sex education. Paul Tonko, who won the seat of retiring U.S. Representative Michael McNulty, will change a mixed record seat to a pro-choice seat. Tonko will be welcomed to Congress by Kirsten Gillibrand who fought hard and well to retain her seat and who consistently supports our issues.

In the N.Y.S. Senate, Roy MacDonald, a pro-choice Republican, won the seat of former Majority Leader Joseph Bruno. He will be welcomed to the Senate by incumbent and strong pro-choice advocate, Neil Breslin. Unfortunately,

MacDonald’s replacement in the NYS Assembly will be Tom Jordan (R) who is anti-choice, leaving our area represented in the Assembly by one pro-choice legislator (Canestrari), four mixed legislators (Gordon, McEneny, Molinaro and Reilly) and two anti-choice legislators (Lopez and Jordan).

More than any other sentiment, people are expressing hope about this election. Hope because the country did not elect a presidential candidate who was ready to overturn Roe v Wade; because the voters of South Dakota once again defeated abortion-ban legislation designed to test the Supreme Court’s commitment to privacy and reproductive choice; and because in New York and many other states, voters elected new, pro-choice legislators at both the state and federal level.

continued page 8

“Yes, We Can!”

SAVE THE DATE
JANUARY 22, 2009

UHPP ANNUAL ROE V WADE
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



Featured Speaker
SARAH WEDDINGTON

Lawyer, Professor and
Women’s Rights Advocate

Successful lead attorney for the
1973 Supreme Court case, *Roe v Wade*.

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Visit our web site at www.uhpp.org for more information.

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CHOICE REMARKS

is a publication of



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www.uhpp.org



President's CORNER

From **PATRICIA A. MCGEOWN, President/CEO**

I write this column with a sense of enormous relief and cautious hope and optimism.

With the election of a pro-choice President, it appears that eight long years of legal, regulatory and financial attacks are coming to an end. This lifts such a burden from our shoulders. We have lived these years with an enduring sense of foreboding – a “what’s next?” sensibility on a daily basis. I look forward to returning our focus to the needs of our patients and communities and working with a government that shares our concerns and values our contributions. It will be so nice to devote our time, energy and resources to serving our patients, rather than defending ourselves against one attack after another.

In addition to electing a president who understands and supports our issues, we also saw the defeat – for the second time – of the terrible South Dakota abortion ban, which many regarded as the likely challenge to Roe. A fetal personhood initiative in Colorado was defeated, as was a parental notification requirement in California. Here in New York State, we increased the pro-choice members in the state legislature and in the congressional delegation.

These changes present us with wonderful opportunities. Comprehensive sex education, a critical component of a successful future for our young people, may finally get the attention and support it deserves here in New York State. Our mission to provide affordable, quality reproductive health care services may finally be recognized as a critical contribution to the economic vitality of our state and nation. And perhaps, the constant attacks on abortion will diminish in frequency, intensity and vitriol.

But I must admit my hope and optimism are cautious. First, I know that between now and the end of the current administration’s term, considerable damage can still be inflicted.

A rule requiring that we not discriminate in hiring and employment against people who are opposed to abortion is set to be issued any day now. We have just heard news that suggests we have narrowly defeated another administration rule that would have dramatically lowered Medicaid reimbursement rates for clinics in New York and resulted in a loss of \$450 million in Medicaid reimbursement for New York, including \$22 million for family planning clinics. The Bush administration is rumored to be rushing to change rules and regulations on the environment and civil liberties as well. In all cases, it could take a new administration many months to identify and unravel these attacks. In the meantime, considerable damage will have been inflicted.

The fiscal crises in New York and Washington are also cause for tempering our optimism. As the cost of goods and services increase, our resources, like everyone’s, are diminishing. Our grants are being cut, our own modest reserves have lost value. Not surprisingly, in these difficult economic times, the demand for our services is at a record level. We are hopeful that the new administration will use the “scalpel” approach and preserve and strengthen programs that offer the potential to improve the health of our citizens and contribute to a productive, secure economy.

We cannot be complacent nor should we be shy. Now is the time to assert the importance and value of the work that we do. We know that when women have access to voluntary family planning services, their health and well-being improve, as does the health of their children and families. Communities are stronger...as are nations. Now is the time to claim our place at the table, and to assert our central role in the stabilization of our economy and the strengthening of our nation.

UHPP HELPS LOCAL REFUGEES

The Capital District refugee population is growing every year. This year, the Albany field office of the US Committee for Refugee and Immigrants (USCRI) helped resettle more than 300 people in our community. The goal of USCRI is to help refugees find employment and housing, enroll in school and gain access to basic healthcare services.

Recent refugees arriving in the Capital District have predominantly come from Burma, Iraq, and the Congo. Many of them have endured great suffering, lived in refugee camps and been separated from family members. UHPP Vice President for Patient Services, Christine Pluviose, reached out to USCRI staff and introduced them to the range of affordable services available through our Albany health center. As a result, many USCRI clients are now coming to us for gynecological exams, Pap smears, birth control services and more.

A big part of a refugee's positive experience at UHPP is the fact that our staff is trained in the use of the AT& T Language Line, an over-the-phone interpreter service that provides translation for hundreds of languages. According to Erika Hague, Preferred

Communities Coordinator for USCRI, "There are real language and cultural barriers when refugees try to use services in the community, but at UHPP they feel welcomed."



Erika Hague, Preferred Communities Coordinator for USCRI, UHPP Vice President for Patient Services, Christine Pluviose, and AyeAye Cho, Family Support Service Program Coordinator for USCRI

"We are grateful to refer patients to UHPP because of Language Line and because the federal grant used to provide medical care for our clients does not cover family planning services," adds AyeAye Cho, Family Support Service Program Coordinator for USCRI. A recent mandate from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security requires any woman, age 11-26 years, who applies for a U.S. green card to be vaccinated against the human papillomavirus (HPV). UHPP is able to provide Gardasil vaccinations free of charge through a grant-based program.

Pluviose has also started to provide workshops for USCRI clients, in order to help them learn about healthy sexuality and reproductive choices and the services available at UHPP. "We are so pleased to be able to welcome and assist these women who are still vulnerable and have such hope and fear about learning to live in a new country," said Pluviose. "Our service to them is an important illustration of our mission at work in the community."

UHPP Receives HEAL Grant

Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood was awarded \$500,000 by the N.Y.S. Department of Health (DOH) under the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law for New Yorkers (HEAL NY) Grant Program. The grant is intended to expand and improve primary care services. The grant will help fund the relocation of our Albany health center. UHPP was one of only two Planned Parenthoods in New York State to be funded and we received the second-largest award in the Northern Region.



New UHPP Vice President for Development



Barbara Milano

UHPP welcomes Barbara Milano to the position of Vice President for Development beginning on November 17, 2008. Barbara worked previously as the President/CEO of the Children's Museum at Saratoga and prior to that as President/CEO of National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Northeastern NY Chapter, in Albany. She has been working in the fund development field for more than 17 years.

"I'm so excited to be joining the UHPP team, whose mission and services I have always fully supported," said Milano. "I believe UHPP to be an important component of necessary health care for women and men in the Capital Region and look forward to building new relationships with our volunteers, local communities and donors."

UHPP GOTV CAMPAIGN WRAP UP

A big "Thank You!" to everyone who helped us in our voter registration drive between August 18 and October 10. Everyone was involved. Front desk staff distributed voter registration packets to interested patients, Patient Services staff encouraged clients to register and vote, interns and volunteers registered people in the Albany health center foyer and the Troy reception area, escorts offered voter registration packets to pedestrians and clients, and External Affairs staff and volunteers did GOTV work at nine community fairs. Together, we put in a total of 378 hours and handed out at least 115 voter registration packets. We hope you feel your efforts were rewarded. In fact, you helped turn out a record number of voters and to bring a significant change to the leadership of our state and our nation.



UHPP staff members Rebecca Morgan, Blue Carreker, Emily Brown and Loren Moore (intern) were part of the enthusiastic Voter Registration drive.

ELECTION RESULTS 2008

WHO WILL REPRESENT THE UHPP SERVICE AREA

U.S. President

Barack Obama (D)*

U.S. Vice President

Joseph Biden (D)*

U.S. Senate

Hillary R. Clinton (D)* and

Charles E. Schumer (D)*

(not up for election in 2008)

U.S. House of Representatives

20th District: Kirsten Gillibrand (D)*

21st District: Paul Tonko (D)*

NYS Senate

41st District: Stephen Saland (R)

43rd District: Roy McDonald (R)*

56th District: Neil Breslin (D)*

51st District: James Seward (R)

NYS House Assembly

103rd District: Marcus Molinaro (R)

104th District: John McEneny (D)*

106th District: Ron Canestrari (D)*

108th District: Tim Gordon (D)

109th District: Robert Reilly (D)

112th District: Tony Jordan (R)

127th District: Peter Lopez (R)

* rated 100% pro-choice by Planned Parenthood Advocates of NYS

SPECIAL NOTES:

The NYS Senate now has a Democratic majority with Malcolm Smith expected to become the Majority Leader. According to Planned Parenthood Advocates of New York State, the New York State Senate gained 3 pro-choice seats and lost 5 anti-choice seats. The balance beginning in 2009 is projected to be 27 pro-choice, 26 anti-choice, 6 mixed seats and 1 unknown. In the NYS Assembly, the new balance will be 92 pro-choice seats, 20 anti-choice seats and 3 mixed seats with 8 still unknown. The U.S. Congress appears to have gained 4 pro-choice seats. The New York Congressional delegation now includes 25 pro-choice members, 13 anti-choice members and 1 mixed member

INTERN POWER



Loren Moore is a senior at the University at Albany studying Communications, currently serving as a Marketing intern at UHPP. She has been involved in preparing media campaigns, organizing market research, tabling at

fairs and contacting outside agencies that refer patients to UHPP to offer updated promotional materials. "My experience thus far at UHPP has proven to be one which I will never forget," Loren said recently. "I enjoy being part of a community whose goal is to serve those in need; those individuals who have been forgotten or shunned by society. This internship has also helped me make a determination about my future career."



Also interning this semester at UHPP is Emma Kahn, a junior at the University at Albany. Emma is working as a Public Relations intern helping research and write press releases, doing press follow-up and keeping a news clippings notebook, plus other tasks as needed. "Working with such passionate and intelligent professionals has truly been inspiring," says Emma. "I have learned a great deal about what goes into creating and sustaining a successful agency." Emma and Loren will be with UHPP until December.

Those interested in interning with UHPP may call 434-5678 x 131 or go to our web site at www.uhpp.org.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



NEW YORK STATE NYS SENATE SWITCHBOARD: (518) 455-2800
NYS ASSEMBLY SWITCHBOARD: (518) 455-4100

WOMEN'S HEALTH MATTERS—NO MORE CUTS!

**PROTECT
WOMEN'S HEALTH**

support family planning funding

Beginning the day after election day, UHPP joined with family planning providers and supporters from across the state in a month-long campaign called Women's Health Matters. Our goal is to convince state legislators and Governor Paterson that further cuts to family planning services would hurt rather than help our state; and that with so many people losing health insurance, it was no time to cut back on preventive health services.

Campaign activities planned as this newsletter goes to press include client postcards, student petitions, phone banking, letters to local newspapers, in-district legislative visits and a Visibility Day tentatively set for November 18 at the NYS Capitol.



IN WASHINGTON US CAPITOL SWITCHBOARD: (202) 224-3121

LATE BUSH ADMINISTRATION RULES THREATEN FAMILY PLANNING

As we reported in the fall issue of Choice Remarks, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued proposed changes to federal regulations designed to "protect" employees and volunteers at health care institutions from discrimination or disciplinary action if they refuse to provide specific patient services based on their conscience. Implementation of this rule would encourage and protect health care employees who refuse to provide or assist in any way with the provision of abortion, emergency contraception, birth control or other services questioned by the religious right.

Over 200,000 individuals, including over 90,000 Planned Parenthood activists, sent comments to HHS calling for withdrawal of the proposed rule. Still, we expect the Bush administration to move forward and issue a "final" rule any day. U.S. Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA) advised the HHS Commissioner in October that the rule "was issued in apparent violation of a policy that requires interagency coordination and review" and this assertion may provide a basis for legal action.

Another rule issued by the Bush Administration, known as the CMS/UPL Rule, would dramatically alter the reimbursement system for services covered by Medicaid. If the rule is implemented, New York State stands to lose more than \$450 million in revenue, based on an analysis provided by the Governor's office. Those particularly hard hit by the rule are community health care providers including family planning providers like UHPP, renal dialysis centers, community mental health clinics and clinics for the developmentally disabled. This policy would leave tens of thousands of patients without access to vital services and seriously threaten the lives of women and families. It would hit New York when the state is already reeling from the economic crisis and reverse the state's successful efforts to increase access to primary care and reduce dependence on expensive emergency room care.

UHPP is working in coalition with other providers and the Governor's office, urging Congress to place an immediate moratorium on implementation of this rule. At press time, a new version of the rule appears to be "on display" with clinic services, including family planning, excluded from the new calculations. If so, our efforts may have been successful!

Keep informed of developments and take quick action regarding these and other advocacy issues through the Planned Parenthood Action Network. Add your name to the email list serve by contacting Blue at 434-5678 x133 or blue@uhpp.org.

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S.T.A.R.S. INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY

The UHPP S.T.A.R.S. (Seriously Talking About Responsible Sex) high school peer education program prides itself on making community connections and building partnerships to address teen pregnancy in Albany and Columbia counties. One way they build partnerships is through UHPP's S.T.A.R.S. Mini-Grants. These awards, which range from \$500 to \$1,500, enable community agencies and after-school programs to sponsor youth-created activities focused on teen pregnancy prevention. Each S.T.A.R.S. Mini-Grant is awarded for an activity that occurs in a zip code area with high teen pregnancy rates, and which meets one or more characteristics of effective teen pregnancy prevention, including male involvement, mentoring, positive youth development, parent-child communication, peer education, and access to reproductive health care.

In a new review process instituted this year, the S.T.A.R.S. peer educators are involved in rating and approving each Mini-Grant application. This deeper involvement in the New York State Department of Health Community Based Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention

(CBAPP) program teaches our peer educators important organizational and life skills and exposes them to many aspects of teen pregnancy prevention. Mini-Grants have been awarded for activities ranging from character development and self-esteem education, to creative arts, youth speak-outs, media productions and community service learning projects.

Manny Laury, an Albany High School senior and S.T.A.R.S. peer educator, notes, "Through these projects I learned about the variety of organizations in my community, as well as how to better take care of my environment and my neighborhood."

Danielle Gilleo, senior peer educator, Hudson High School Alternative Learning Program, says that "participating in these great experiences helped expose me to exciting and diverse things in life outside of Columbia County. We bonded with people we wouldn't ordinarily speak to."

So far in 2008, UHPP's CBAPP program awarded 16 mini-grants, totaling over \$17,000 to community partners in Albany and Columbia counties that share our commitment to preventing teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections among young people.



Letycia Tillman, Angela Mathews, Ashley Brown, Krishona Denise Brown, Sabrina Soares-Kern, Johron Lee, Brihan Ford, Ej Napier, and Tiffany Ford participate in a team building exercise during a UHPP S.T.A.R.S. program retreat at Silver Bay.

CAPITOL STEPS

On Thursday, September 25, 2008, UHPP held our annual benefit at the Egg in Albany, featuring the hilarious musical political comedy troupe the Capitol Steps. The evening was a great success for the organization, and we thank all of our donors and friends for attending. As CEO Pat McGeown said at the beginning of the evening, "After the year we've all had, we deserve to laugh."

Sponsors for the Capitol Steps event included **Family Planning Advocates of NYS, First Niagara, Greenberg Traurig, LLP,** and **Johnson Illington Advisors LLC**



Senator Neil Breslin, Mary Lyn Koval, members of the Capitol Steps, and UHPP staff members Emily Brown, Pat McGeown, Blue Carreker and volunteer Allie Fitz enjoy the evening.

DONOR PROFILE... DR. PENNY AXELROD



Dr. Penny Axelrod has been involved with Planned Parenthood for nearly 19 years, both here in the Capital Region and while living in New Orleans. She has not only been a generous donor, but an active volunteer. Penny's volunteer activities include past terms as both a member and president of our Board of Directors, service as a Leadership solicitor for the Annual Fund, and ongoing participation in a wide variety of advocacy efforts.

Penny's involvement with Planned Parenthood began when she was principal of a school in a New Orleans psychiatric hospital. After a teenage boy in her care related a story about his sexual experience she became "convinced that providing comprehensive sexuality education to teenagers is a good idea." She began bringing a Planned Parenthood educator into the facility to speak to the teenagers about responsible sexual behavior. Ever since then, she has been an advocate for education programs.

Two months after moving to the Capital Region, Penny called UHPP to see how she could help us and she has been doing just that ever since. As a major donor she knows that by giving to UHPP she is supporting "the mission of UHPP and helping to promote our programs. We can get our services to people who might not otherwise have access. That is why I am proud to support UHPP."

Why I Joined the Board



In each issue of Choice Remarks, we ask one or two of our current Board members to share their reasons for volunteering in a leadership role at UHPP. Our thanks to Sherry Gold and Beth Sher for their contribution to this issue.

"I joined the UHPP Board because I believe access to quality reproductive health services and education is a right. I look forward to working with the very dedicated staff and volunteer Board members to continue to grow UHPP's clinical and educational services."

Sherry Gold



"I recall being a poor college student (I don't even want to think about how long ago that was) and I went Planned Parenthood for a health care concern. It seemed only natural that when asked I agreed to serve to help current and future generations of women in whatever way I can. I am a committed believer in the mission of this agency."

Beth Sher

Gifts in Tribute

Giving tributes is a special way to remember or honor someone special, while helping others in our community. If you would like more information about tributes, please call 434-5678 x141.

The following tribute gifts have been received since our last issue of *Choice Remarks*:

In Honor of Lisa Blumerman
By William Blumerman

A Special Tribute

A young, male Planned Parenthood donor in California emailed an idea to his friends this summer, suggesting that they all give a gift to Planned Parenthood "in honor of" Governor Sarah Palin. It was a small gesture of protest against a Vice President candidate with a long history of opposition to comprehensive sex education and reproductive choice. The email went viral and, as a result, hundreds of thousands of dollars came in to local Planned Parenthood affiliates and to Planned Parenthood Federation of American. Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood received \$375 in donations as a result of this grassroots email effort. Acknowledgement of each gift was sent to the donor and to Governor Palin.