

# the Advocate

Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts

winter 2019

## Beyond Roe: Expanding Abortion Access in Massachusetts



Nina Gallant

Over 400 people attended Sexual Health Lobby Day at the Massachusetts State House in January to advocate for the *ROE Act* and other sexual and reproductive health priorities for the 2019-2020 legislative session.

This January marked the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that established the right to safe, legal abortion. Since the day *Roe* was decided, anti-abortion extremists in Congress and state houses have been chipping away at the ruling – and now, the Trump-Pence administration is dead set on gutting and overturning *Roe*. These attacks include appointing two anti-abortion Supreme Court judges, and, most recently, attempting to undermine private insurance coverage of abortion.

Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts (PPLM) and its political arm, the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund (PPAF), are fighting these attacks by doubling down on efforts to protect and expand abortion access for Massachusetts women, no matter what happens in the Supreme Court or the White House.

“In 2018, in response to the Kavanaugh nomination, we repealed archaic abortion laws in Massachusetts. In 2019, we have the opportunity to continue this leadership and fortify our own commitment to reproductive rights. We can ensure that abortion is not only safe and legal, but affordable and accessible, regardless of who you are, what your zip code is, or

how much money you make,” said Leda Anderson, PPAF associate director of public policy and government affairs.

At the start of the 2019-2020 state legislative session, PPAF and its partners are poised to work with the Massachusetts legislature to pass a bold, new reproductive health policy: *An Act to Remove Obstacles and Expand Abortion Access*, otherwise known as the *ROE Act*. The *ROE Act* will:

- Repeal the state’s parental consent laws that interfere with the ability of young women to safely access abortion care. Massachusetts has one of the most restrictive parental consent laws in New England.
- Ensure people can access affordable abortion care regardless of income or legal status.
- Keep all medical decisions between a woman and her doctor, including in cases of fatal fetal anomalies.
- Remove the inflammatory language regarding abortion – rooted in politicized rhetoric rather than science and medicine – that exists in current state laws.

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Says Anderson, “For many in Massachusetts, the constitutional right to abortion does not translate into access to care. This is especially true for young people, women of color, those who live in more rural areas of the state, people with low incomes, and those who face systemic barriers to care.”

While this legislative work moves forward, PPLM will continue to raise public awareness, combat abortion stigma, and offer high-quality, nonjudgmental reproductive health care to all who need it – no matter what.

# ceo's corner



Natasha Moustache

Dear Friends,  
Since our fall issue of *The Advocate*, we continue to witness some of the most vicious attacks on reproductive health and rights that we've ever seen. With the confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court and new efforts to roll back birth control and abortion access, PPLM is prepared to protect our patients at every turn. We are staying at

the forefront of the fight to ensure every person has the rights, care, and freedoms necessary to pursue the life they want.

In this issue of *The Advocate* you'll read about PPLM's strategic work to expand access to safe, legal abortion (p. 1) and our new, innovative efforts to engage parents, through technology, in their children's sex education (p. 3).

Thanks to our supporters and advocates, PPLM has never been in a better position to lead this fight. We are grateful for the generosity of individuals, foundations, and corporations – like Eastern Bank (below) – who passionately stand with us in our belief that reproductive health care is a basic human right. Together, we refuse to let the Trump-Pence administration deter us from advancing health equity right here in Massachusetts. That's why PPLM is pushing ahead to enhance access to health care and disrupt sexual and reproductive health disparities in the Commonwealth.

Thank you for all you do to raise up our work and fuel our collective vision. Your support keeps our patients healthy, keeps politicians from infringing on these fundamental rights, and keeps PPLM strong, now and into the future.

Jennifer Childs-Roshak, MD, MBA  
President and CEO

## advocate spotlight: Eastern Bank & PPLM - Advancing Women's Health and Rights



Greg Cooper

Eastern Bank Chair and  
CEO Bob Rivers

**PPLM is proud to be a recipient of longtime generous support from Eastern Bank, most recently in the form of a \$10,000 grant through the Bank's Targeted Grant Program. We spoke with Chair and CEO Bob Rivers about the Bank's mission and support of PPLM.**

**Q: Eastern Bank is known for its progressive corporate values. Has this always been the case?**

**BR:** Since our founding 200 years ago, Eastern has been a social enterprise wrapped in a business, with a three-pronged commitment to community service, philanthropy, and advocacy. Our mission is to do good things that help people prosper by helping them achieve their financial and life goals, while supporting the many communities upon whose success we depend.

**Q: Do other institutions follow your lead?**

**BR:** Our success makes it clear that doing the right thing for your community also means doing the smart thing for your business. So, yes, we hope additional businesses will join us in supporting PPLM and other like-minded organizations.

**Q: What's the goal of Eastern's Targeted Grant Program?**

**BR:** We prioritize specific issues each year – in 2017, we focused on supporting immigrants. In 2018, we focused on creating opportunities for women who are disproportionately affected by issues like sexual assault, domestic violence, health care disparities, and pay equity.

**Q: Competition for these grants is tough. Why PPLM?**

**BR:** PPLM is right at the center of our focus because PPLM fights for gender equity and women's health. We want to help PPLM break down persisting barriers to care for underserved women, and for all women in our community.

# program spotlight

## Digital Innovations: PPLM Reaches Parents Online

PPLM has launched two innovative digital education websites that empower parents and other caring adults to have open conversations with their children about sex, puberty, bodies, and relationships. Both tools underscore PPLM's belief that parents are the primary sexuality educators of their own children. In fact, research shows that open, honest communication between parents and their children help young people make healthier, safer decisions about sex throughout their lives.

*Kids-Ask: Crafting Answers to Curious Questions* (Kids-Ask.org), one of PPLM's new websites, helps parents answer questions about sex and sexuality. PPLM educators built the website around the needs of younger children who sometimes get left out of the conversation about sexuality but may nonetheless brim with curiosity about topics ranging from "Where do babies come from?" to "When can I date?" Based on the child's inquiries, parents can visit the *Kids-Ask* website and build a response script with language that validates and clarifies medically accurate information, and supports parents in sharing their own values.

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Parents of older children have their own online resource linked to their kids' enrollment in PPLM's middle-school curriculum, *Get Real: Comprehensive Sex Education That Works* (GetRealEducation.org). The *Get Real* for Parents mobile website follows up on classroom topics by supporting parents in starting and continuing conversations with their kids through the use of online activities. Says Jennifer Hart, PPLM director of youth and professional education, "Many parents have told us 'I wish I had you in my pocket' when their kids come home with tough questions. This website, which can be accessed 24/7 from a cell phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop, is our way of being in their back pocket whenever they need us."



Like the *Get Real* curriculum, the site is age-appropriate; parents can talk with their sixth graders about puberty, with their seventh graders about media literacy, or with their eighth graders about gender identity and relationships. Both parents and young people report higher rates of conversations about these topics while using the *Get Real* app, and the tool helped spur additional conversations long after they logged out.

PPLM's digital education programs are constantly evolving based on parents' input and ideas. Future components may include video and audio features, translation into Spanish and other languages, and additional discussions around consent. "Parents are moving us to technology," says Hart, "and we'll meet them wherever they are."



For more information and to explore the tools yourself, visit [Kids-Ask.org](http://Kids-Ask.org) and [GetRealEducation.org](http://GetRealEducation.org). This work is made possible by the generosity of Amalie M. Kass.





# faces & places



Top: Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-7) speaking at a rally on Boston City Hall Plaza in October protesting the nomination of Justice Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court, with PPAF volunteers and coalition members; Middle: *Get Real* Teen Council members, PPAF staff, and volunteers at Worcester Pride in September; Bottom: Planned Parenthood Federation of America Board Chair Naomi Aberly, author Anna Quindlen, Marcia Head (event host), and PPLM President and CEO Jennifer Childs-Roshak at the President's Society Sponsor event in November (credit: Natasha Moustache).



## Upcoming Events

**March 28th:**

**Celebration of Choices** to benefit the Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts. 6:30 pm, Fairmont Copley Plaza, 138 St. James Avenue, Boston. Visit [pplmvotes.org/MAChoices](http://pplmvotes.org/MAChoices) for details.



**PPLM celebrates 90 years!**  
Visit [pplm.org/90years](http://pplm.org/90years) to learn more about our history.



**The FY18 PPLM Annual Report is available online!**

We invite you to learn more about the work your investment in PPLM made possible by visiting [PPLM.org/FY18AnnualReport](http://PPLM.org/FY18AnnualReport).

**Please support PPLM today by visiting [www.pplm.org/donate](http://www.pplm.org/donate) or emailing [development@pplm.org](mailto:development@pplm.org).**