

# the Advocate

Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts

autumn 2018

## PPLM Celebrates 90 Years

Dear Friends,

This year, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts (PPLM) celebrates the 90th anniversary of our founding. Throughout our history, PPLM has delivered high-quality, nonjudgmental reproductive health care to the people of Massachusetts. I'm incredibly proud of PPLM's record of achievement, which has been made possible thanks to our supporters, advocates, and allies.

As you know, it hasn't been easy. Planned Parenthood has weathered aggressive opposition from political forces, and today we face a national climate of unprecedented hostility. Once again, PPLM must fight to protect our right to safe, legal abortion, and access to basic birth control and affordable health care.

During these challenging times, it is our responsibility to lead and push for progress on behalf of our patients and the Planned Parenthood movement. This past state legislative session, PPLM's political arm, Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts (PPAF), intensified its advocacy efforts to protect access to care – and we saw extraordinary success. The new *Contraceptive ACCESS Law* defends and expands access to no copay birth control; the *Protecting Access to Confidential Health Care Act* breaks down barriers to care for young people; and the *NASTY Women Act* negates archaic, unconstitutional abortion and birth control laws.

**During these challenging times, it is our responsibility to lead and push for progress on behalf of our patients and the Planned Parenthood movement.**

Nationwide, we mounted opposition to the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court, and we will never stop fighting to protect *Roe v. Wade* (page 2). In partnership with other family planning



Nina Gallant

PPLM President & CEO Jennifer Childs-Roshak speaking at the Boston #NoGagRule rally in May.

providers, Governor Charlie Baker, and Attorney General Maura Healey, we're pushing back against President Trump's proposed domestic gag rule – a dangerous measure that would prevent millions from accessing family planning services. And, with PPLM's new strategic plan, we are laser-focused on building health equity in communities across Massachusetts by playing a more deliberate role in reducing disparities – which includes the roll-out of gender affirming hormone therapy in our health centers this summer (page 3).

As we prepare for the next 90 years, PPLM is strengthening our state's commitment to reproductive rights, individual liberty, and the ability of all people to make their own decisions about their bodies, their lives, and their futures. Thank you for making this vital work possible.

Jennifer Childs-Roshak, MD, MBA  
President and CEO

CELEBRATING  
**90**  
YEARS OF CARE

**1928** PPLM is founded as the Birth Control League of Massachusetts.

**1965** In *Griswold v. Connecticut*, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that a state's ban on the use of contraceptives

violates the right of privacy and could not be enforced against married people.



**Planned Parenthood**  
Care. No matter what.

# advocate spotlight: Wendy Robinson

## Rising Up for *Roe*



Planned Parenthood volunteer Wendy Robinson speaking in front of the U.S. Supreme Court at a rally to oppose the Kavanaugh nomination in August.

In 1961, when Wendy Robinson was 17, she made the decision to end her pregnancy. Although she was fortunate to have her parents' support and resources to pay, there was no clinic to visit, no reputable doctor to consult. Through secretive word-of-mouth, she finally found a doctor who instructed her to enter his office at night, through a back door. He treated her with contempt, called her a "sinner," and threatened her with reprisals throughout the procedure. "I was lucky. I

survived without injury," Wendy says. "And my abortion enabled me to live the life I wanted and to become a parent when I was ready."

Wendy is a longtime Planned Parenthood volunteer and activist for reproductive rights. Soon after President Trump's nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court, Wendy joined PPLM President and CEO Jennifer Childs-Roshak and U.S. Senator Edward Markey (page 4) for a press conference at PPLM's Boston health center to send the message: with this nomination, *Roe v. Wade* is on the line. Later this summer, she participated in national efforts to mobilize against the nomination and joined U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren on stage during the *Rise Up for Roe* tour stop in Boston.

**"Women have always had abortions and always will, no matter what politicians decide. Abortion is a necessary part of women's health care, and it needs to be safe."**

-Planned Parenthood volunteer Wendy Robinson

Wendy has come forward to tell her story because she wants younger women, who grew up with safe, legal abortion as a right, to understand what life was like before *Roe*. By understanding their own history, Wendy believes, women will be empowered to act.

Wendy asserts that "women have always had abortions and always will, no matter what politicians decide. Abortion is a necessary part of women's health care, and it needs to be safe." Her activism is now focused on challenging individual state measures that restrict abortion. (More than 300 such measures, in 37 states, were enacted in 2018 alone.) With the state legislature's passage of the *NASTY Women Act*, repealing archaic abortion restrictions in Massachusetts, Wendy is encouraged: "Whatever happens at the federal level, I know Massachusetts will emerge even stronger and will continue to make these issues a top legislative priority."

**1973** On January 22, the landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizes abortion.

**1974** PPLM creates the Counseling and Referral (C&R) Hotline to address the need for accurate information about reproductive health.

**1982** On December 1, PPLM opens its first health center in Worcester.

**1990s** PPLM begins to offer sex education in schools and community settings.

**1994** On December 30 – a tragic day in PPLM's history – a gunman attacks PPLM's Brookline health center and murders staff member Shannon Lowney

# program spotlight

## Respecting Identity, Transforming Care



AMIR NOW INC.

Photos from the "My Care. My Way." campaign

PPLM health centers recently expanded services to provide gender affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) to the transgender community in Massachusetts. Announcing this new service in July, PPLM President and CEO Jennifer Childs-Roshak proclaimed, "Trans rights are reproductive rights, and reproductive rights are trans rights. I'm so proud to see PPLM transform our health center practices to ensure we provide the nonjudgmental, inclusive care that every patient deserves."

GAHT, which includes the prescription of the hormones estrogen or testosterone, helps affirm a patient's gender identity, decreases symptoms of gender dysphoria, and enhances a patient's quality of life. Dr. Childs-Roshak says, "Many transgender people find it difficult to access compassionate care because of systemic and institutional barriers. Some patients can't locate providers; some are treated poorly." One national survey found that,

of transgender people seeking health care, 33 percent reported having at least one negative experience with a provider in the past year, including verbal harassment, refusal of treatment, or having to educate providers about transgender issues in order to receive care. As a result, patients' health and well-being have suffered.

Before launching GAHT, PPLM held focus groups with transgender community members around the state to ask about their experiences in medical settings. Participants were clear: Treat us with dignity and respect, and trust us to make our own decisions about

our bodies. One respondent said, "Many trans people delay seeking care, whether it's transition-related or otherwise, because we don't feel that our identities will be respected."

To spread the word about the new service, PPLM launched a multimedia visual campaign titled "My Care. My Way," elevating the voices of the transgender community, while educating people about GAHT and other PPLM services. This latest advancement in PPLM care affirms the organization's essential role in meeting the health care needs of all people, no matter what.



### "Trans rights are reproductive rights, and reproductive rights are trans rights."

—PPLM President and CEO Jennifer Childs-Roshak

For more information about GAHT at PPLM, please visit [pplm.org/gaht](http://pplm.org/gaht)

and critically wounds three others. He then attacks nearby Preterm Health Services, killing staff member Leanne Nichols and injuring two more victims.

**1997** PPLM opens its new Boston Health Center at 1055 Commonwealth Avenue.

**2005** PPLM establishes a Family Planning Fellowship, training abortion providers to provide care across the U.S.

**2005** PPLM launches *Get Real*, a sex education curriculum for middle and high school students, and *Let's Be Honest*, a parent education program.

**2016** PPLM expands its health care services to include PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis), a daily pill to help prevent HIV.

# faces & places



## Upcoming Events

**October 29:**  
President's Society  
Conference

**December 11:**  
Cambridge House  
Party

Above: PPLM President and CEO Jennifer Childs-Roshak and U.S. Senator Edward Markey at a press conference to oppose the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. Middle: PPAF volunteers at the Boston Pride March in June. Below: PPAF volunteers at the *Healthy Youth Act* Lobby Day on Beacon Hill in July. (Credit: Nina Gallant)

## Welcome to the PPLM Family!

PPLM welcomes its newest members of the Board of Directors: Landis Becker Young, Charles Farkas, Johanna Longnecker, Wanda McClain, and Richard Salcedo.

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

**Welcome, Dr. Leana Wen, Incoming President of Planned Parenthood**  
For the first time in nearly 50 years, a doctor will lead Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Along with Planned Parenthood's 12 million supporters, Dr. Wen will lead the fight to protect access to reproductive health care.



PPFA

**2016** PPLM establishes its social science research program, becoming the first Planned Parenthood affiliate to launch such a program.

**2017-18** The Massachusetts state legislature passes into law the *Contraceptive ACCESS Law*, the *PATCH Bill*

(enhancing patient confidentiality), the *NASTY Women Act*, and a paid family leave bill.

**2018** PPLM expands its health care services to offer gender affirming hormone therapy for the transgender community.

For more of our 90-year history, visit [pplm.org/90years](http://pplm.org/90years)