

The Full Mar Monte SUPPORTERS EDITION

A guiding beacon for patients Our Regional Reproductive Health Coordinator team

One of the services that makes PPMM stand apart is the way we help patients navigate the complicated health care system for outside referrals, ranging from mastectomies to, most recently, gender affirmation surgery. Our amazing Regional Reproductive Health Coordinator (RRHC) team not only guides patients through the network of local hospitals and providers, but also steers them through the maze of public and private insurance coverage to make sure they receive the care they need.

Recently, the Full Mar Monte caught up with the leader of the nine-member RRHC team, Regional Reproductive Health Supervisor **Katherine R.**, to talk about how they do it.

Full Mar Monte: Can you give some examples of how the RRHC team jumps in to help our patients?

Katherine R.: We handle all outside reproductive health referrals for every patient, and we have established a bond with regional providers. So, for example, if someone comes to one of our health centers for a breast screening and our clinician finds a lump, that patient would be referred out for a diagnostic mammogram. Our team takes it from there. We send the referral to an outside provider, explain it to the patient, and we get the patient's results. Frequently, we are tracking (a patient) all the way through breast cancer treatment and shepherding them through the whole experience, including handling the insurance process.

FMM: Are there some other common medical situations that the RRHC team handles for treatment referrals and follow-up?

Katherine: We do a great deal of follow-up for patients being monitored for abnormal pregnancy hormone results, to rule out conditions like ectopic pregnancies. Sometimes that means we are trying to track patients down so we can alert them to their lab results and persuade them that they need to go to the emergency room immediately. This can be truly life-saving!

FMM: It sounds like it would be a huge relief for patients to be able to rely on the RRHC team.

Katherine: It is extremely rewarding to be able to help people in a situation like this. They've often had a life-changing diagnosis, they are very anxious, and they have no idea what to do next. We're able to help them right away because we're very knowledgeable about the system and how to get them to the next place as quickly as possible, and we focus on being very kind and empathetic.

Patients are so glad they can depend on us to handle this for them, and our PPMM providers love us because we know the whole process so well.

FMM: How did you get started doing this work, and how has the RRHC position been enhanced over the years to form this one team dedicated solely to patient referrals?

Katherine: I first came to PPMM as a volunteer 30 years ago, and I've been doing patient referrals forever. Now we have a structured, centralized team of nine people to take care of referrals throughout the affiliate, in full compliance with PPA protocols. We have an exhaustive directory of outside providers throughout our affiliate service area. We work off reports which show every single patient that needs a referral and follow-up.

FMM: Are there any particular stories that stand out for the team?

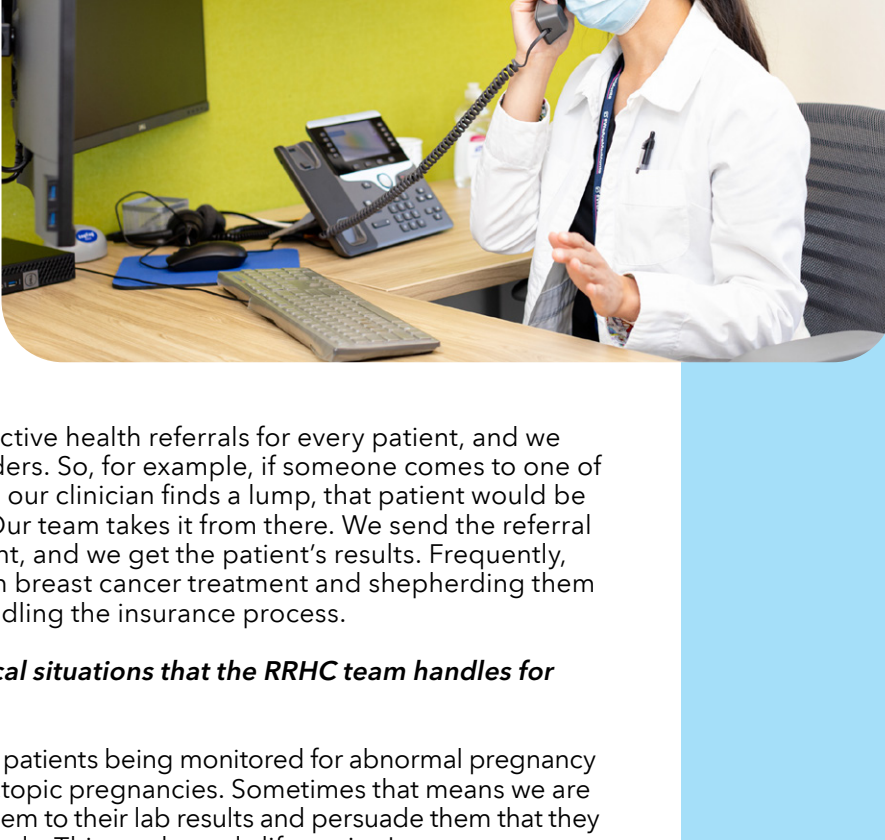
Katherine: One member of our team, **Bianca O.**, helped a patient who had been diagnosed with breast cancer, was undocumented, had lost her job due to the pandemic, and had been living off her small savings for months. Bianca helped her enroll in programs that covered the cost of her imaging and consults/treatments. This patient was so grateful that she dropped off sets of beams of scarves that she had hand-knitted as a special thank-you to us.

Another team member, **Jessica A.**, helped a breast cancer patient who was living alone and terrified by her diagnosis. Jessica was able to enroll her in a program that quickly scheduled her treatment. The patient called Jessica several times to ask more questions and get assistance with scheduling appointments. She was so thankful for Jessica's help and compassion and said she'd never experienced the level of care she had received from us.

FMM: That's fantastic. Are stories like this the most gratifying part of your job?

Katherine: Yes, we're able to help people during what is often the most frightening time in their lives and bring them real peace and healing. I really love my job and my incredible team. Everyone pitches in to help each other, and we rely on each other for advice about how another team member might handle a certain situation or follow-up plan. This is how we constantly evolve and learn. We have a saying that unites us if any of us is feeling stressed or overwhelmed, "WE GOT THIS!"

And we do!



PPMM videos on a screen near you!

Since the beginning of this year, PPMM has produced a series of short (1-3 min.) videos, highlighting the ways we serve our communities. They show the amazing work the affiliate has done, from responding to the pandemic to establishing gender affirming care to providing abortion care in regions that are "abortion deserts."

Some of these videos have premiered at major fundraising events presented by the Development team, and they have been posted on our social media channels. Some have also been shared with California state legislators.

We encourage you to check them out, too – and feel free to share them on your personal social media.



PPMM services in the Central Valley, May 2021, from Capital Dinner fundraiser
4:30 min./sec.



Fresno Clinician Dr. Danielle Harik, discussing how her family medicine patients have benefited from telehealth (sent to California legislators in April, 2021)
1:30 min./sec.



PPMM's COVID-19 Response, from March 2021 Peninsula Breakfast fundraiser; 3:42 min./sec.



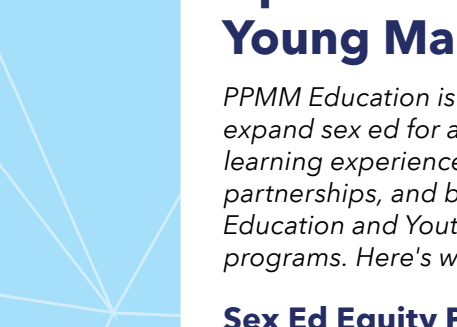
Mountain View health center, from March 2021 Peninsula Breakfast fundraiser
3:30 min./sec.



COVID Response video, Monterey County, February - March 2021
4 min.



Dr. Cassy Friedrich, Gender Affirming Care, from FY21 Impact Report
1 min.



HSS Kim, Coliseum HC, re. abortion patients, from FY21 Impact Report
1 min.



Maureen, young former birth control patient, NV, from FY21 Impact Report
1 min.



Bernadine, former abortion patient, Santa Cruz, from FY21 Impact Report
1 min.

FROM THE EDUCATION DESK

Updates: Sex Ed Equity grant and new Young Mamas Group

PPMM Education is continuing to expand sex ed for all through new digital learning experiences, collective impact partnerships, and by growing our Peer Education and Youth Development programs. Here's what's new:

Sex Ed Equity Project

PPMM Education just received a large federal Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) Program grant that will significantly expand our impact in regions where youth, parents, and students need us the most.

The two-year, \$2 million grant, funded by the U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Office of Population Affairs (OPA), will deliver trauma-informed sex ed via seven community partners within the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. It will serve 1,335 systems-involved youth in five high-need PPMM counties where the affiliate wants to grow its impact in FY22: Washoe and Carson in Nevada, as well as Kern, Tulare, and (south) Monterey in California.

This new funding will advance PPMM Education's capacity-building strategy to train and support the youth influencers who already live and work closely with the teens in our affiliate territory – influencers including, parents/guardians, resource families (foster care), group home/detention center staff, social workers, youth development organization teams.

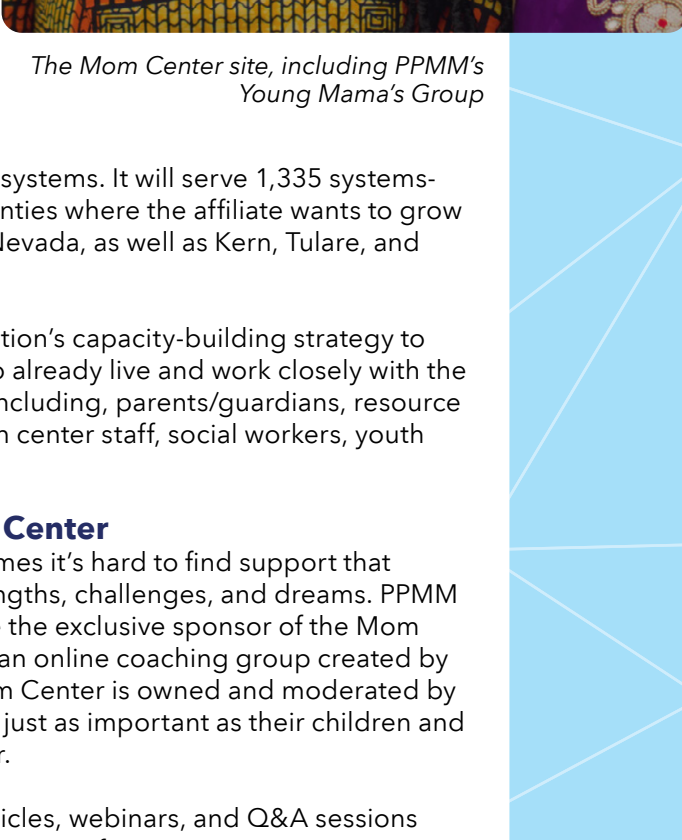
Young Mamas Group on The Mom Center

For our communities' young moms, sometimes it's hard to find support that speaks to their shared realities, needs, strengths, challenges, and dreams. PPMM Education is excited to share that we will be the exclusive sponsor of the Mom Center's new Young Mama's Group (YMG), an online coaching group created by and for young mamas, ages 16-25. The Mom Center is owned and moderated by BIPOC moms who believe that mothers are just as important as their children and deserve a space to build resiliency together.

The YMG's learning community includes articles, webinars, and Q&A sessions hosted by Mom Center moderators. Young mamas from our territory can register and access the community for free or via partners like Teen Success, Inc. or our current PPMM programs, including the Teen Parent Support Program in Santa Clara County. They'll get daily coaching support from YMG moderators who answer members' questions and provide resources, weekly advice posts about health and wellness, relationships, goal setting and parenting, as well as monthly YMG group video chats, mini eCourses and trauma-informed parenting classes.

Do you know young mamas who live in PPMM territory or organizations that serve them?

Please send them to: bit.ly/MomCenterYMG and give them this code to register: PPMMYdev



The Mom Center site, including PPMM's Young Mama's Group

COVID Care STORIES

These are stories about how our amazing staff is caring for the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can read more on the PPMM blog at ppmarmonte.org/blog.



Dr. Danielle H.

"Motivational interviewing" helps patients reach their health goals

Dr. Danielle H. came onboard with Planned Parenthood Mar Monte six months into the pandemic, treating family medicine patients in the Central Valley when telehealth services had been launched at every health center.

"One of the first things I realized is how much a lot of the care and counseling we do can be accomplished over the phone," she said. "This has been a huge help for so many patients who are simply unable to come in to health centers because they don't have enough time over their break at work or can't pull their kids out of school for a half-day to bring them in."

Dr. H. said that a lot of the "motivational interviewing" she does with patients on the phone has resulted in them lowering their blood pressure, losing weight, or effectively managing other chronic health problems.

"I ask patients questions about what their health goals are and how we can come up with a plan to achieve those goals, whether it's smoking cessation, or losing weight, or managing blood sugar levels," she said. "We assess what motivates them, which allows people to come up with their own ideas for self-care management. I can also do medication management over the phone."

"It's exciting to teach people how to be in control of their own health in the way that will be best for them. And we see great results!"

Love Notes Appreciation for PPMM staff, from donors and supporters

Thank you for always supporting your community and for providing a safe place for people to get help and maintain their health. I remember visiting PPMM as a teen, and it felt very empowering to be supported by health staff that did not judge me. I appreciate what you do every day.
-Supporter from Silicon Valley

Thank you so much for everything you do!! Your services before and during this pandemic have made me feel that much more secure in my life, and I really admire your passion and care.
-Supporter from Silicon Valley/Coast

When my three children were in high school, we came to PPMM to stand and protect patients from the crazy crowd. In college they used PP services, as did I. You are vital to the mission. Thank you for the kindness and strength with which you serve.
-Donor from San Francisco

MMCC keeps it upbeat for patients and staff in San Jose

Every month, we ask the staff at one of our health centers three questions about the work they do.

What are you most proud of about the way your health center has responded, to patients and each other, during the pandemic?



Mar Monte Community Clinic (MMCC) staff

MMCC has continued to carry out its mission to provide access to care to patients in the San Jose area and beyond, throughout the pandemic. We have worked hard to cultivate a cheerful, supportive work environment for all. This supportive environment is reflected in morning greetings and end of day goodbyes from everyone, as well as the patient-centered care provided to all who walk through our doors seeking care.

How would you describe the culture at your health center?

Our culture is one of cooperation, teamwork, and support. We have a good set-up for learning and training for staff at all levels of expertise. Team members are encouraged to ask questions and to strive for excellence in their care. HSS mentors help new HSSes. Providers and the manager make themselves available for questions and support for both experienced and new staff. No one is afraid to ask for help or clarification and all are willing provide help when asked.

How does your health center staff best reflect the values of PPMM?

By supporting one another and honoring ourselves to contribute to a positive work environment, we tend to the team and respect and work hard and those who walk through our doors. We care for our business and return to our mission by taking advantage of the pandemic protocols that allowed us to stay safely open in a very trying time.

The Big Picture

New Public Affairs director for Sacramento/Stockton/East Bay region brings unique personal perspective

Sacramento/Stockton/East Bay Public Affairs Director **Candelaria Vargas**, who came onboard in July, is an accomplished political and community organizer committed to working to improve the lives of families, especially reconstructing systems that marginalize communities of color.



Public Affairs Dir.
Candelaria Vargas

Candelaria is also a proud third-generation resident of the Central Valley and granddaughter of migrant farm workers. She has first-hand experience with some of the challenges she is helping others to overcome: She is a former foster child and survivor of childhood trauma who graduated as valedictorian of her high school class and went on to earn bachelor's and master's degrees.

Most recently, Candelaria served as campaign director at Daily Kos, the largest progressive online media outlet in the country, working on issues ranging from comprehensive immigration reform to Medicare for all. As a mom of two little girls, she is especially motivated to serve on community boards that focus on children's health and education – including her recent two years on the Stockton School District's Board of Trustees.

The Full Mar Monte caught up with Candelaria to see what she's most looking forward to working at PPMM.

Full Mar Monte: How would you describe the perspective you bring to your work here?

Candelaria Vargas: Well, I'm from the communities we serve – not just the location but my lived experience. For example, talking about sex before marriage is a real taboo issue in my culture. I know how to talk to people in a way that's not threatening but very practical. "I understand how challenging it is to speak about this, but do you want to be prepared?" My experience with childhood trauma and the foster care system has also made it easier for me to talk to people about knowing when to ask for and accept help.

Education is very important in my personal story. It was my way out of poverty, an abusive household, and helped me work towards being autonomous. In my community organizing, I've also seen what education also means for our community as a whole – for young people, families, voters – anyone, and the power it gives people to make decisions that impact not only their own lives but their communities.

FMM: Did you have any prior connection with Planned Parenthood?

Candelaria: Yes! I was a patient at Planned Parenthood. It's where I got all my birth control and my health exams. This was especially important before the ACA passed because it was really hard for my mom and for me to afford the care we needed. We had even been turned away from the emergency room. Planned Parenthood was crucial for me.

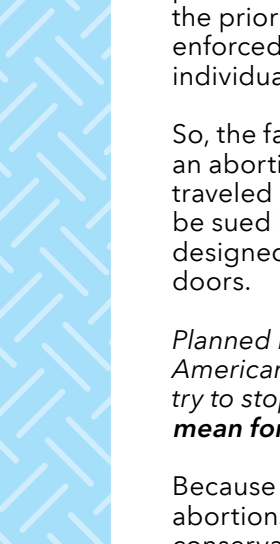
FMM: What is one of the most important things you learned in your last job as a campaign director at Daily Kos?

Candelaria: Even before COVID hit, I learned how beneficial digital organizing can be – what we can do for folks who don't have as much access and how we can make an online space where they feel comfortable participating. For a lot of people, being able to participate online in the evening, after dinner when the kids are in bed, makes a huge difference.

Another thing I learned there is the importance of having strong coalitions with different organizations and building relationships with elected officials. It's really relationship-based. You have to learn what's important to them to be able to speak effectively about what's important to the groups and communities you represent.

FMM: What drew you to work at PPMM?

Candelaria: One of the things I appreciate most is that Planned Parenthood is right at the forefront of working on community advocacy as well as providing health care. They engage supporters and patients in advocating for their right to health care. It's about letting them know they have this power, as voters, and how they can use it. A lot of community work still needs to be done with voter engagement, even in California where there are more protections. And (PPMM) is a major part of making that happen.



LETTER FROM THE CEO Update on the new Texas abortion law

Hello Friends,

I wanted to give you an important update about a couple of things, and I'll start with addressing questions I've heard about the truly alarming new Texas anti-abortion law, Texas Senate Bill 8 – or SB 8 – that's scheduled to go into effect on September 1.

Not only does SB 8 ban abortion after only six weeks, but the law allows anyone from any state – including complete strangers and even family members – to sue anyone who provides or intends to provide an abortion after six weeks in Texas. What sets it apart from the prior abortion bans that federal courts have blocked is that, rather than being directly enforced through state prosecutors or public health officials, it is enforced by private individuals. This first-of-its-kind provision makes the law more difficult to stop.

So, the family friend who drives someone to their appointment in Texas; the staff at an abortion fund that helps uninsured Texans pay for abortion care; the provider who traveled hundreds of miles to help someone in a Texas abortion-access desert could be sued by anyone, including by anti-abortion protesters in another state. This law is designed to intimidate health center staff and force Texas abortion providers to shut their doors.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), the Center for Reproductive Rights, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and other groups have filed suit in district court to try to stop SB 8 from going into effect in September. You may be asking, what does this mean for PPMM in California and Nevada?

Because both PPMM states have strong abortion-rights laws, we will continue providing abortions even if this case ends up in the U.S. Supreme Court, and the extreme conservative majority unlikely the law – which would likely lead to similar bans in at least 20 states. This case may come before the Court in October, even before the Mississippi abortion-ban case that directly challenges Roe.

We will work with partners to be a safe haven for those seeking abortion care from other states. Our health centers in Oakland and Reno, in particular, are well situated to host patients who may fly in from around the country to seek the care they need.

We also have numerous teams working collaboratively to create a local action plan, including actions our supporters can take to stand in solidarity with those in Texas and elsewhere who may be impacted by these draconian laws.

And we must remember that we are the majority! Recent national polls have shown that over 70% of Americans want safe, legal, abortion. So as PPFA goes to court, and we prepare to educate and mobilize our supporters, remember that we will not stand by and let extremists take away people's rights to make the most personal decisions about their health and future.

In closing, I'm excited to announce that on September 1, PPMM will welcome our first-ever VP of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Arthur Chan.

Arthur has an impressive background in DEI work, and we will be telling you more about him in an upcoming edition of the Full Mar Monte Supporters Edition. Arthur is very excited about joining PPMM and helping us to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion to make our organization an even more welcoming place where all feel they belong.

In the meantime, I will keep you posted about developments regarding the dangerous anti-abortion cases that are headed to the Supreme Court this fall. Thank you so much for all the support you have shown our staff and patients during these very challenging times.

In Solidarity,

Good Reads

July 23, NBC News

What U.S. abortion-access looks like, in graphics

July 23, Washington Post (op-ed)

How the Supreme Court could decimate reproductive rights without overturning Roe

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