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Thanks to our community and business supporters for displaying the 75th Anniversary window decal! Ben and Jerry's, Flamingo Antiques, Headlines LTD, JG's Pizza, Lark Central Market, Lark Street Deli Catering, Lark News and Grocery, Lark Street Flower Market, Inc., Legends Sports Lounge, The National Upholstering, Perfect Cuts, Ramona's Cafe, Sam's Home Cooking, Shining Star, Spa Virgo, and Walkin Closet.

DON'T BE LEFT OFF OUR SIGNATURE AD!

Stand up for choice and don't have your name left off our full-page ad in the Albany *Times Union* to celebrate our 75th Anniversary. To be included in the ad, call Barbara at 434.5678, ext. 125 or email her at barbara@uhpp.org. You can also download the signature card at our website at www.uhpp.org. Look for our ad in October!

to reduce teen pregnancy, UHPP has responded to the needs and challenges of each generation. Standing strong amidst adversity, the agency has demonstrated constant vigilance in protecting the rights of women and families to reproductive health and choice for 75 years.

Are you interested in UHPP history? Visit our website at www.uhpp.org or contact us to order a copy of Mary Kahl's wonderful book, *Controversy and Courage: Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood from 1934 to 2004*.

professional staff.

In 1971, New York became one of the first states to make abortion legal. Then, on January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision in *Roe v. Wade*, recognizing the constitutional right to privacy and women's right to choose abortion. By 1984, the now-named Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood had health centers in Albany, Hudson, East Greenbush and Troy and provided a wide range of reproductive health services to over 12,000 patients per year. In 1986, after a long court battle with the Catholic Conference, UHPP also began providing abortion services in Albany. A patient escort program was formed to welcome patients and protect them from picketer harassment.

Over the last 25 years, UHPP has expanded its health services, educational programs and advocacy efforts. Today, UHPP health centers provide more than 22,200 visits per year and provides educational programs reaching more than 6,100 young people, parents, teachers, and professionals in our community. In 2008, UHPP had 124 volunteers that provided more than 2,300 hours of service.

From its earliest days of providing birth control education to women and families seeking a method for spacing their children, to its current provision of affordable, professional, reproductive health care services and award-winning programs

CHOICE *Remarks*

A Publication of Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood

Serving Albany, Columbia, Greene and Rensselaer Counties

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS!

Women's struggle for reproductive rights has been one of the defining issues of the 20th century. Committed individuals in the Capital Region have worked since 1934—for seventy-five years—to ensure the right and ability of individuals and families to choose when and whether to be parents. This is the history of Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood.

In the early part of the 20th century, information and products concerning contraception and family planning were considered “obscene” under what were known as the federal “Comstock laws” and those who distributed such material and products were subject to arrest. Yet, in 1934, 11 men and women held a meeting in Albany to create an independent birth control clinic to be housed at 214 State Street in the offices of Dr. Frances Vosburgh. The group called themselves the Albany County Birth Control Committee.

In 1936, Margaret Sanger (founder of Planned Parenthood in New York City) and other birth control proponents won a major judicial victory. The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered a sweeping liberalization of the Comstock laws. Contraceptive devices and birth control could no longer be classified as obscene, the court ruled, based on contemporary data regarding the damages of unplanned pregnancy and the benefits of contraception. The decision, however, applied only to New York, Connecticut, and Vermont, and it would take another 30 years before married couples throughout the country gained the right to obtain contraceptives from licensed physicians.

But while the provision of family planning information and supplies was legal, it was still very controversial, and still

condemned by the Catholic Church. By the time of the 1936 court decision, the Albany birth control clinic had been moved to Albany Hospital and renamed the Albany Maternal Guidance Association. In 1937, an additional clinic opened at the Trinity Institution in the South End section of Albany.



Both of these locations were short lived. The church hierarchy had great influence on local institutions. Feeling increasing pressure from influential Catholic Board members, both the

Albany Hospital and Trinity Institution locations were forced to close. But the commitment and vision of local volunteers and supporters prevailed. In 1947, the Planned

Parenthood Association of Albany (PPAA) was established at 20 Trinity Place, with Dr. Vosburgh once again serving as the physician.

The next major event in the history of Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood came with the introduction of “The Pill” in 1960. Patient visits at PPAA increased dramatically as more women sought the ability to control the timing and spacing of their pregnancies. By 1967, the agency had nearly 3,000 active patient files, and recorded 800 new patients and 10,000 patient visits. PPAA moved to 225 Lark Street to accommodate growing community needs, and began to be seen as a reproductive health care provider for the entire community, rather than a birth control provider for low-income women. Funding became available through the federal Title X Family Planning Program, which allowed the agency to expand hours and begin to convert to a

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SAVE THE DATE THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2009 UHPP 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, FRANKLIN PLAZA, TROY, NY

Join our special guest speaker Dr. Kenneth Edelin, author of *Broken Justice: A True Story of Race, Sex and Revenge in a Boston Courtroom*. The book details the events of his life when, shortly after the decision in *Roe*, anti-choice officials in Boston prosecuted him for performing a legal abortion. For more information or to be included on the invitation list, please call 518.434.5678 ext. 141.

CHOICE REMARKS

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PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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President's CORNER

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

The more things change, the more things stay the same. Now that we have a pro-choice president, a pro-choice governor, and a generally more socially liberal environment, one would think that reproductive rights are finally safe. Sadly, that is not the case. There is clear evidence on the national and local levels that the threats to choice continue and, in some respects, have become more sinister.

Throughout the debate on health care reform, there have been constant efforts to eliminate reproductive health care from any plan. Yet, reproductive health care is *basic* health care for women. When women obtain reproductive care, other conditions, such as high blood pressure or diabetes, are often detected. Women spend 68% more out-of-pocket on health care than men, mostly for reproductive health care. But some in Congress believe that coverage for women's basic needs should not be included in health care reform. Over 30 amendments have already been introduced to limit women's access to reproductive health care! Women are at risk of being worse off under health care reform than they are without it, by having the services they use and/or the providers that they trust, such as Planned Parenthood, excluded. So far, all such amendments have been defeated.

The battles go beyond health care reform. The Title X federal family planning program was created in 1970 by President Nixon and since that time, this program has provided consistent and critical funding to Planned Parenthoods, including UHPP, for the provision of affordable reproductive health care services. Yet, this summer, during Congressional debate on the appropriations bill, an effort was made to bar any Planned Parenthood from receiving Title X funding. Fortunately, with the strong support of many of you, the proposal was defeated.

Defeats in the public policy arena may have an impact on the climate around our clinics. As

legislative, regulatory and funding efforts are increasingly met with resistance and defeat, many in the anti-choice movement may begin to feel disenfranchised and powerless. In some cases, this may lead to more aggressive behaviors. The Southern Poverty Law Center reports that hate group activity has escalated, including that by fringe groups that oppose abortion. Sadly, only five months into the Obama administration, Dr. George Tiller, one of the few providers of late-term abortions in the country, was murdered. The last murder of a physician who provided abortions was during the Clinton administration, when six abortion providers and clinic workers were murdered and there were 17 attempted murders. Additionally, there were 12 clinic bombings or arsons. Conversely, during the Bush administration when anti-choice legislative and public policy initiatives were more successful.

On the local level, we've seen a definite increase in the numbers of picketers and a particularly disturbing growth in the number of young anti-choice demonstrators. All three of our health centers have experienced increases in the frequency and number of picketers, as well as more intrusive behavior such as video taping staff and patients' license plates and posting the pictures on anti-abortion websites.

At a time when there is optimism and promise for progressive issues, it is discouraging to be contending still with the threats and attacks of the opposition. The resources that we must devote to these battles—personnel, volunteers, dollars, time—have an opportunity cost: there are programs and services that are not being offered because our human and financial resources are focused elsewhere. With the support of so many of you, we will continue to do our best to advance our cause and protect our rights. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

SecurReach – QUICKER TEST RESULTS!

UHPP now offers “SecurReach” as a way for patients to receive test results and information. This new system is an innovative and cost-effective solution to ensure that patient test results are communicated properly and in a timely manner.

How does it work? Once a lab result is returned, the physician or nurse simply records the appropriate test results message using a USB microphone, and the system notifies the patient by phone and email that the results are available. Patients are given a secure voicemail box and PIN to call and can then retrieve their test results at any time. This



approach significantly reduces patient anxiety as well as staff time devoted to communicating results to patients. Staff will continue to make personal contact to ensure appropriate follow up and referrals for negative test results.

According to Dr. Christine Pluviose, Vice President for Patient Services, “This type of system is the future. It benefits the agency and is part of our ongoing effort to stay on the cutting edge of new technologies and services that can benefit our patients.”

UHPP Offers New Contraceptive Options

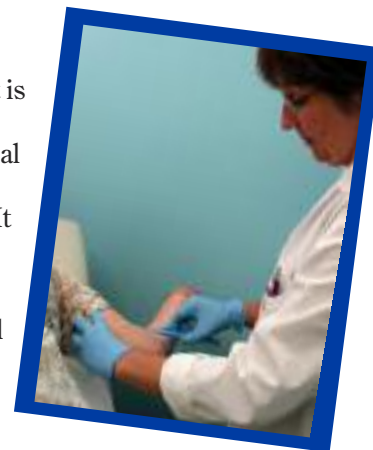
A new form of emergency contraception (EC) called Plan B One-Step is now available “over the counter” without a prescription to women ages 17 and older at local UHPP health centers in Albany, Hudson and Troy. UHPP health centers also now offer the implantable contraceptive called Implanon.

“We are constantly seeking ways to offer our patients the most effective methods of contraception,” stated UHPP Vice President for Patient Services Dr. Christine Pluviose. “Offering a variety of methods enables a patient to choose an affordable product that fits her medical history and life choices, and thus increases the probability that she will use it consistently and correctly.”

In March of this year, a federal district court judge ordered the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to allow the emergency contraceptive product, Plan B, to be marketed as an over the counter (OTC) medication to women and men 17 years and older and as a prescription product for those younger than age 17. In July, Duramed/Teva gained FDA approval for the distribution of “Plan B-One Step,” a new, one-tablet form of emergency contraception as an OTC product for women and men at the younger age threshold. The new One-Step product will replace Teva’s original Plan B product.

UHPP also recently began offering patients an effective, discrete and long-lasting method of birth control called Implanon. This implantable contraceptive is a thin, flexible matchstick-sized rod that is inserted into the arm to prevent pregnancy. Since it is a progestin-only method, it is especially attractive to women who cannot use contraceptives that contain estrogen. Implanon is also of special interest to those who have difficulty remembering to take a birth control pill every day. It is safe, convenient, and 99% effective for three years. Most women cannot see the implant after insertion. It is also reversible. After Implanon is removed, the woman’s ability to become pregnant usually returns quickly.

“We are excited to be offering this new and long-lasting birth control option to our patients,” stated Beverley Krauss, Physician’s Assistant and UHPP’s Medical Advisor. “A significant number of patients have asked for this particular product, because of its ease and effectiveness.” During the first week of availability, eight patients were scheduled for an insertion visit.



uhpp.org: **NEW LOOK!**

UHPP’s website has a new look! As a part of the redesign of Planned Parenthood Federation of America’s online resources, our website has gone through a makeover, with new colors, a new banner image and a new promotion format to highlight items of interest. But it isn’t a case of form over function. In addition to the redesign, PPFA also rolled out a full Spanish-language version of their website, an updated companion website for teens, named “Teen Talk,” and a suite of interactive applications for patients, including “The Check,” a quiz designed to help people assess their risk for sexually transmitted infections, and “My Method,” a questionnaire that pairs patients with the right contraceptive options. Visit www.uhpp.org to see what you think!

FREE HIV TESTING DAY!

It’s better to know. Take control. Take the test! That was the theme of this year’s effort to encourage people to get tested for HIV during National HIV Testing Day. UHPP offered free HIV testing in all three health centers during the last week of June. In addition, UHPP worked with the New York State and Columbia County departments of health, the Hudson Housing Authority, and the NYS Department of Health AIDS Institute to offer three additional testing sites in Columbia County. More than 20 individuals took advantage of the free testing.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

UHPP staff and volunteers recorded 32 visits in 2009 to the offices of New York State Assembly and Senate members to advocate for our legislative priorities. We also mobilized hundreds of volunteer activists to send emails, make phone calls and sign postcards. Once again, we worked in collaboration with Family Planning Advocates (FPA) of New York State, other Planned Parenthood affiliates and partner organizations to achieve important progress on our legislative agenda.

FUNDING FOR FAMILY PLANNING

Thanks to our rapid and strong mobilization of support in the early months of the year, and our sustained contact with the Governor's office and legislators, family planning funds were not cut back in the 2009-2010 budget. Our message that access to affordable family planning services is critical for women and families, especially during the economic downturn, was heard and heeded by members of both political parties.

ABORTION ACCESS – REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND PRIVACY ACT

We almost made it! Two years of quiet advocacy, challenging discussions and bill adjustments working with pro-choice legislators and with the Governor's office, brought this important bill within two days of passage in the Senate. Then, as most readers know, the Democratic majority in the Senate was compromised by a "coup" and progress screeched to a halt. Still, we gained new and important allies and look forward to possible passage of this bill in the next legislative session. Our thanks, particularly, to local clergy who participated in Clergy Lobby Day around this issue, and to the New York Civil Liberties Union and the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault (NYSCASA) who included this bill among their 2009 legislative priorities.

IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S HEALTH – LANGUAGE ACCESS

On May 11, 2009, UHPP staff participated in the "Healthcare Access for All" conference and lobby day sponsored by FPA. We were thrilled to work with immigrant women and their advocates to gain expertise and to educate legislators about the need for ensuring access to medical interpreters for health care services in a confidential setting.

BECOME A FAN OF UHPP ON FACEBOOK!



Search for Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood on Facebook and become a FAN! A great way to get updates and find out how you can help promote reproductive health and choice!

COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION – The HEALTHY TEENS ACT

The Assembly once again passed the Health Teens Act, but the Senate did not take up the bill, largely because of funding concerns. We will continue to work for passage of this bill to create a grant program for schools seeking to improve or expand comprehensive sex education. In the meantime, we are also collaborating with legislators, educators and partner agencies to take advantage of potential new federal funding.

EQUALITY AND JUSTICE – MARRIAGE EQUALITY, DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT, GENDER EXPRESSION NON- DISCRIMINATION ACT (GENDA)



UHPP staff members Amber Sickles, Marielle McKasty and Leigh Kleinklaus

UHPP staff and volunteers joined thousands of advocates at the largest ever Equality and Justice Lobby Day and rally, sponsored by the Empire Pride Agenda on April 28, 2009. The convention center was filled to capacity and the sun shone for an amazing rally in the West Capitol Park, as momentum for marriage equality and an end to discrimination and harassment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals and families reached an all-time peak. Unfortunately, momentum for full passage of these bills was also cut short by the Senate coup.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

As the newsletter goes to press, it is early August and the White House and Congress are working at an unprecedented pace to come up with a plan for major health care reform before the end of 2009. As the nation's most trusted reproductive health care provider and an integral part of America's health care safety net, Planned Parenthood has acted as a key player in this process.

Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) President, Cecile Richards has led the national organization in an unprecedented mobilization effort engaging thousands of activists to achieve the following two goals: ensure that comprehensive reproductive health care is included in any health care reform package; and ensure that essential community providers like Planned Parenthood are included in health plan networks so patients can receive care from trusted providers in their communities.

Throughout the summer, UHPP recruited and mobilized staff, volunteers and patients to participate in lobby visits, petition drives, postcard campaigns and phone banking as part of this national campaign. We also attended many of the local "town meetings" called by members of Congress to hear constituent concerns about the goals and details of health care reform.

On July 14, 2009, UHPP President and CEO Patricia McGeown, along with representatives from Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson, the New York State Coalition for Sexual Assault and Family Planning Advocates of New York State, held a press conference to explain the campaign and its goals to local media representatives.



UHPP Vice President for Public Affairs, Blue Carreker, along with Youth Facilitator Nicole Dallas and S.T.A.R.S. peer educators Angela Mathew and Letycia Tillman joined over 400 advocates who made over 200 lobby visits during July's national lobby day. We discussed health care reform with Congressman Paul Tonko (pictured above) and Scott Murphy. Other New York advocates met with Senators Kristin Gillibrand and Charles Schumer..

"The women of New York and the nation must be better off - and certainly not worse off - after national health care reform, than they are today," said McGeown. "There needs to be a clear understanding that reproductive health care is essential primary care for women of all ages. Reproductive health care providers like Planned Parenthood also serve as a critical entry point into the health care system for millions of women and families."

Anti-choice organizations have seen health care reform as an opportunity to further restrict access to abortion and other reproductive health services, and to eliminate Planned Parenthood from federally established health care networks. Constant vigilance and voter mobilization will continue to be necessary to identify and defeat these efforts.

For up to date information on this campaign, go to www.uhpp.org or www.womenshealthmattersny.org.

UHPP IN THE COMMUNITY!



More than 30 UHPP staff members, volunteers and S.T.A.R.S. peer educators turned out to march in the annual Capital Region LGBT Pride Parade and Festival in Albany on June 13.



UHPP at the Cancer Run/Walk in Hudson on June 6 to raise money for the Columbia County Health Care Consortium. From left to right, Toni Stratman, Jocelyn Stratman, Amelia Stratman (in stroller), Dara Lasher, Chelly Hegan, Dawn Finney, Julie Pierino and Gretchen Brown.

S.T.A.R.S. PEER EDUCATORS End of Year!



Columbia County S.T.A.R.S. Peer Educators (back) Angela Mathews, Danielle Gilleo, Myles Shapard, EJ Napier, (front) Jena Castano, Courtney Stalker and Letycia Tillman at Flag Day in Hudson.



UHPP Sexual Health Educator Meaghan Carroll with S.T.A.R.S. Peer Educators Tiffani Bonenfant, Krishona Brown, EJ Napier and Angela Mathews at the Capital Region LGBT Pride Parade and Festival in Albany.



Albany County S.T.A.R.S. and their parents end-of-year celebration.



Columbia County S.T.A.R.S. end-of-year celebration.

The end of the school year is always a time of mixed feelings for the peer educators and for all who work with the UHPP S.T.A.R.S. (Seriously Talking About Responsible Sex) Peer Education program, as the old team phases out and the new team is recruited and hired. Nonetheless, the S.T.A.R.S. peer educators still managed to end the year with a flurry of activity!

With the beginning of the nice weather comes what UHPP calls the “Fair Season”—the time when UHPP is represented at community fairs throughout the Capital Region. The peer educators were busy tabling at several events this spring and early summer, including the Capital Region LGBT Pride Parade and Festival, TulipFest, and the Hudson Black Cultural Parade and Festival. Each year, our staff and peer educators reach over 3,000 young people at various fairs and community activities.

“The S.T.A.R.S. peer educators are the best way to reach young people in their communities,” said Gretchen Brown, UHPP’s CBAPP Director. “By meeting other teens where they are, our peer educators can have open and honest conversations. They are able to answer questions about sexual health frankly, with the facts, and refer them to UHPP’s weekly teen clinics.” Brown

added that she has seen first hand that young people, as well as their parents and caregivers, really appreciate the peer educator presence at community events!

Both Albany and Columbia counties peer educators selected a unique way to end the school year. Each group held an “educational celebration” which combined a parent-child communication workshop with a time to recognize the successes of the S.T.A.R.S. program over the past school year.

Krishona Brown, a tenth-grade Albany High School S.T.A.R.S. peer educator summed up her experience: “My first year in the S.T.A.R.S. program was way more than I expected. I learned how to be more comfortable talking about sexual health and I made a lot of new friends that I will love forever. At the end-of-the-year dinner, I brought along my mother and I was happy that she got to see me in the limelight, with all the people that I work with having a lot of fun.”

Welcome to Our New Board Members

UHPP welcomed four new members (pictured below) onto the Board of Directors at our Annual Meeting in May. Beginning two-year terms with the Board are: Laura Turnblom of Kinderhook, NY, Attorney, Malkin & Ross; Sara Oberst of Troy, NY, Health Program Administrator for the HIV Uninsured Care Program at the New York State Department of Health; Virginia Martin of Claverack, NY, Democratic Election Commissioner for Columbia County and Lara Kassel of Albany, NY, Coordinator for Medicaid Matters, New York Center for Disability Rights.

WHY I JOINED THE BOARD

In each issue of Choice Remarks, we ask our Board members to share their reasons for volunteering in a leadership role at UHPP. Our thanks to Virginia Martin, Lara Kassel and Laura Turnblom for their contributions to this issue.

"I joined the Board of UHPP to do what I can to ensure that the important health care services, along with the terrific educational programs at the center and in our local schools, have the direction and support they need and deserve."—Virginia Martin

"I joined the UHPP Board to be part of an organization that ensures all women in the community receive welcoming and appropriate health care. I hope to be able to work to advance UHPP's goals in the coming years."—Laura Turnblom



"I joined the Board of UHPP to help make a difference in the lives of families, teens, and young adults in our community. UHPP plays an integral role in ensuring access to high-quality health services, the promotion of accurate sex education, and the assurance that women will have options and be able to make the choices that are right for them and their families."—Lara Kassel

ANNUAL MEETING VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

UHPP held our Annual Meeting and Recognition Reception in May at the Opalka Gallery on Sage Colleges Albany Campus with the President of Sage Colleges, Dr. Susan Scrimshaw, as our featured speaker. In her speech, Dr. Scrimshaw addressed the critical need for accessible reproductive health care and shared anecdotes and statistics from studies she and her students had completed in Latin American and the United States.

At the event, UHPP recognized our "Diamond Trustees," a new donor tribute designation which honors those who have given a total of \$75,000 or more in their lifetime. This new designation was



**Rabbi Donald Cashman, outgoing Board Chairperson,
Patricia A. McGeown, President and CEO and Phoebe
Powell Bender, Diamond Trustee**

created as part of our year-long celebration of UHPP's 75th Anniversary. The first inductees recognized at the Annual Meeting include Phoebe Powell Bender, Edward J. Gibson, Mildred P. and Toge S.K. Johanson (deceased), Judith Grunberg and Charles W. and Barbara C. Manning.

Two individuals were honored for volunteering in public affairs at UHPP consistently for twenty years. Dr. Penny Axelrod of Nassau and Elayne Gold of Clifton Park have both served as UHPP patient escorts and in a variety of other capacities including lobbying, outreach, GOTV activities, events tabling and more.

Expanding Access * Meeting Needs

Thanks to a handful of very committed donors, volunteers and Board members, we are well into the planning and quiet phase of a campaign focused on one very important project: the expansion and relocation of our Albany Health Center and Administrative offices to modern, spacious, efficient, technologically up-to-date space at 855 Central Avenue. As we move forward, you'll hear much more on our plans and activities. Should you wish to talk about the campaign or consider a gift, please contact Barbara @ 518-434-5678 ext. 125.

Vagina Monologues

Patricia A. McGeown, UHPP President and CEO, and Barbara Milano, UHPP Vice President for Development received a check for \$1,380 from Amanda Brinke, ABB Event Productions, who graciously organized and directed three wonderful performances of the "The Vagina Monologues" at Magnolia's on the Park this spring. Thanks to all who attended and supported this event and to Magnolia's on the Park and Amanda Brinke for their consistent support.

