

MOVING FORWARD.



About Ivy Vazquez: "I Feel Blessed to be Here"

Thirty-one years of care and compassion provide stability for the Waterbury health center.

It's 2020: a new year, a new decade, and health care access is still under attack. However, at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) in Waterbury, our focus is always on our patients. There you'll find Ivelisse Vazquez.

Everyone - her patients, family, and friends - knows her as Ivy. Ivy is a staple at the health center and in the community. An advanced clinic assistant, Ivy is in her 31st year at the Waterbury health center. Patients that Ivy served when she started at PPSNE now bring their grandchildren to her.



Ivy Vazquez, advanced clinic assistant, provides compassionate care to all who come to the Waterbury health center.

"I grew up in Waterbury," said Ivy. "My heart is here, I went to school in Waterbury, all my connections are here. My family, friends, community, and church are in Waterbury." **It is this deep connection to the Waterbury community that patients have come to know and love about her.**

Ivy holds many roles as advanced clinic assistant. She is often the first and last person a patient sees as they pass through the doors of the Waterbury

"It's all about respect and dignity and treating patients as you want to be treated."

health center. Ivy is also the medical interpreter for Spanish speaking patients where she serves as the patients' and the clinicians' voices to ensure they are clearly understanding each other. She is also

the volunteer liaison as well as the community outreach coordinator. She attends health fairs in schools and churches to share information about our health care services, as well as information about healthy relationships and peer pressure.

Each day, Ivy looks forward to helping someone in her community, and our patients look to Ivy for her consistency and the stability it provides.

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At Planned Parenthood, It's Personal

Reflecting on the stories and connections that move our work forward.

I was so moved earlier this year when I heard actress Michelle Williams share her personal story of choice during her acceptance speech at the Golden Globes awards ceremony. As she spoke about the decisions she has made in her life, I couldn't help but think about the people who come through our doors every day at Planned Parenthood.

Each and every person we serve has a story, too. Patients like Taylor, a college student who works full-time to pay her tuition and support herself. She comes to PPSNE for affordable birth control. And Leila, a single mom who knows **she can rely on PPSNE for annual wellness exams and primary care services that are available when she needs them.**

You make it possible for over 78,000 patients every year – patients like Taylor, Leila, and many more – to access the health care they want, need, and deserve. **Your support is even more critical now, as we explore options to manage a**

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about the wide range of services we offer and build trust within the communities we serve. Our dedicated staff members like Ivy Vazquez at our Waterbury health center are making a difference every day. Our amazing volunteers put their own

\$2.1 million federal funding loss since the Trump-Pence administration forced Planned Parenthood out of the Title X family planning program. Thanks to you, PPSNE will be here to provide care, no matter what.

As you'll read in this newsletter, **personal connections matter at PPSNE. It's how we increase awareness**



Amanda Skinner, President and CEO

passion for our mission into action by sharing their time and talents in meaningful ways across our two states.

One of the parts of my role that I especially enjoy is getting to know many of you. **I am continuously inspired by your stories of what connects you to Planned Parenthood, and why you make it a priority to support our mission and work.** I hope to see many of you at our annual Spring Luncheon coming up on Tuesday, April 7th at the Stamford Marriott.

In closing, as I reflect on personal connections I want to acknowledge the special partnership I've had with our Vice President of Development, Marjorie Wren, who will be retiring from PPSNE at the end of March. **Mar has been an instrumental partner to me and I want to thank her for her 15 years of dedicated service to this organization.** Please join me in wishing her all the best on her next chapter.

In solidarity,
Amanda

Online Appointment Scheduler Provides Access for Patients

Digital innovation breaks down barriers to scheduling health care appointments.

At PPSNE, we are so grateful to our patients who choose to come to our health centers for their sexual and reproductive health care services, education, and counseling. We consistently work to improve our patients' health care experiences and remove barriers that would keep them from accessing the health care they need and deserve.



One method PPSNE developed to expand access is the Online Appointment Scheduling System (OAS), which is new technology that allows our patients to schedule their own appointments, with privacy and ease. OAS manages one-third of all appointments for annual exams, pregnancy tests, birth control, and STI testing and treatment.

Today, over 4,000 appointments each month are booked using OAS, which supports all

17 of PPSNE's health centers. Any person, including new patients, can use this service, and their feedback shows that they are extremely satisfied with the new system. Here is what our patients have said about OAS:

"It was easy and fast, and confidential. It takes away the stigma of having to talk to someone."

"It's very easy to make and cancel an appointment. I love how simple it is to use and the privacy/control it gives the patient."

We continue to build on the initial success of OAS, listening to our patients and adding additional services such as medical abortion appointments. Coming up, we plan to add primary care visits and gender-affirming care appointments. **Innovation like OAS is what our patients deserve.**

Your generosity and support of digital innovation have allowed our patients to take control of their health care by scheduling appointments on their time - even after regular health center hours - late in the evenings or overnight. Patients love OAS because it is reliable, fast, easy to use, secure, and private. **When access to care is expanded, our patients win.**

Check out OAS by visiting ppsne.org!

OAS has a high satisfaction rate amongst all patients surveyed

92%

are Very Satisfied and Satisfied

The Power of Fundraising Events

When Planned Parenthood supporters gather, magic happens.

Each year, numerous volunteers and donors help plan and execute three major fundraising events for PPSNE that generate nearly \$1 million to support patient care and education.

These events are held in the spring and fall in Stamford, New Haven, and Providence.

PPSNE events are tremendously successful because of donors, supporters, and volunteers like you who are passionate about ensuring access for every person who needs sexual and reproductive health care services.

In addition to raising funds for our critical work, these events educate and engage current donors and introduce new people to Planned Parenthood and our mission. **They also heighten awareness, build relationships, engage board and staff members, and provide opportunities for volunteers to give back to our communities.**

Events feature engaging speakers on a wide range of topics related to the work of PPSNE, such as sexual and reproductive health for all people, legislation and court cases, maternal health, and other social justice and health issues.



PPSNE events bring friends together for a powerful purpose.

We are grateful for our donors and volunteers who make these great events possible. Your effort, time, and financial support not only demonstrate just how passionately you care about Planned Parenthood and our patients, but also make the work possible.

If you want to attend, sponsor, or volunteer for upcoming events, email special.events@ppsne.org.



**I STAND
WITH
PLANNED
PARENTHOOD®**

Spring Luncheon

FEATURED SPEAKER

Brittany Packnett Cunningham

A leader whose "voice is going to be making a difference for years to come." - President Barack Obama

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Stamford Marriott

Visit ppsne.org/Luncheon



FOCUS Contributors

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Education with Roots in the Providence Community

Helping build confidence and skills.

Healthy decisions about sex and sexuality begin with sex education and thankfully donor support is the backbone for PPSNE's educational efforts. Your support allows us to offer a wealth of information and resources about sexual and reproductive health to thousands of people. Through our programs, our patients, youth and families develop the behavioral skills and confidence needed for healthy relationships.

We reach deep into the Providence community to bring information and support so people can make informed decisions about their sexual health. Our educators are in community organizations, schools, churches, detention centers, and substance abuse treatment programs reaching youth in their neighborhoods and their safe spaces.

We also offer professional development training to help teachers, counselors, and social workers educate youth about sexual health. **This has recently expanded to include information about sexually transmitted infections, gender identity, and pregnancy options.**

Pablo Barnes, medical inventory specialist at PPSNE and former New Haven Student Teaching About Responsible Sexuality (STARS) attributes the STARS program for his knowledge and empowerment.



ALL STARS gather together annually to learn, fellowship, and have fun. They come from all over Connecticut and Rhode Island for this one-day convening.



Providence STARS tackle tough topics to become powerful peer educators.

"It inspired me to want to work here, and to look for opportunities in new spaces," said Pablo. "Talking about sex is taboo in many communities but Planned Parenthood educators are so brave. There is so much to learn. STARS inspired me to look for truth because there's so many falsehoods especially around sex ed."

On the horizon for the Providence education team is a new LGBTQ+ sexual health education program called "IN•clued." **Breaking new ground like this would not be possible without donor support.**

While conversations about sex aren't always easy, **we know that more conversations lead to more understanding, less stigma, and fewer myths.** PPSNE's education and training programs include:

Teen Talk, STARS, SHAPE (Sexual Health Advocacy for Peer Education), Real Life, Real Talk, and Human Sexuality.

Ready to have powerful conversations? **For more information about any of the education and training programs, email education@ppsne.org.**

Be Counted and Be Heard in 2020

PPSNE is working to increase participation in the 2020 elections and federal census.

The year 2020 will be historic for millions of Americans, with critical elections and a once-a-decade federal census. PPSNE is working to boost participation in both, and with over 78,000 patients and supporters, we have a big reach.

Historically, a high percentage of Planned Parenthood patients are under-represented at the ballot box, so with your help, PPSNE is focusing on increasing voter engagement.

Health center volunteers help patients understand how to register, and where and when to vote.

Similarly, PPSNE is educating patients about the 2020 federal census. Census data determines how almost \$800 billion in federal programs is allocated to states. Many of these programs directly impact health, such as Medicaid, Title X, social services, and maternal/child health block grants.

Often our patients are from under-counted and vulnerable communities. **Because of donors like you, PPSNE can invest resources and staff to work with local and state communities in “get out-the-count” efforts.** PPSNE serves on Census Bureau Complete Count committees in both Connecticut and Rhode Island, and partners with other community organizations involved in census efforts.



Thanks to donor support and staff dedication, Planned Parenthood has become the nation's leading sexual and reproductive health care provider, educator, and advocate. Part of our job is to help increase participation in the census and elections in 2020. **This will help ensure everyone in our communities, especially those who face barriers to health care, is counted and represented.**

The health of our patients, and the health of our nation depend on you. You can continue to make a difference. Want to learn more?

Email organizing@ppsne.org to get updates.



DON'T MISS OUT ON ADVOCACY ACTION!

Planned Parenthood Votes! CT & RI advocacy updates have moved to **ACTION Quarterly** – the new Planned Parenthood Votes! donor newsletters for CT & RI that keep you up to date on organizing and electoral efforts such as the legislative session updates and actions, youth and community organizing, electoral campaigns, and more. You'll get all the details you need to stay informed on the impact of your PPV!CT & RI support. If you're interested in receiving the winter edition of **ACTION Quarterly** for your state, contact Amanda at advocate@ppsne.org.

PPV! CT & RI are the 501(c)4 organizations under which Planned Parenthood works to advance access to health care and defend reproductive rights in CT and RI.

Clinical Research Bring Enormous Benefits to Patients

Trials position PPSNE as a leader in sexual and reproductive health research.

PPSNE has earned an excellent reputation for high-level clinical trials, beginning with its first clinical research trial – for a contraceptive patch – 10 years ago.

Since that time, PPSNE has contributed to and has been a site for 44 clinical trials related to contraception, medication abortion, STIs, alcohol-related HIV and STI risks, unintended pregnancies, primary care, and more. **The goal of each and every study is to improve the health and lives of patients, through sexual and reproductive health.**

Early results for one of the most recent and exciting trials of the decade were announced in December 2019. The trial focused on Amphora®, a gel to prevent urogenital chlamydia and gonorrhea in women. Increased STI rates across the nation are fostering new efforts to help prevent the continued spread of STIs.

About 2.4 million cases of chlamydia and gonorrhea were diagnosed in 2018. The exciting news is that clinical trials have shown that the use of Amphora® reduced the rate of chlamydia by nearly half and reduced the rate of gonorrhea by 78%. The Amphora® trial tested a microbicide gel that can decrease incidence of chlamydia and gonorrhea and also increase women's resistance to infectious organisms.

Our patients, community partners, and supporters look to PPSNE as the experts in sexual and reproductive health care. **With your support, we are committed to improving people's lives, tackling public health concerns, and making important contributions to sexual and reproductive health research.**

Use Tax ID # 06-0263565

DOUBLE YOUR GIFT...

...with the help of your employer when you give to Planned Parenthood of Southern New England.

Check with your employer to see if they will match your gift to PPSNE. Every dollar makes a difference!

"About Ivy Vazquez" continued from the front page.

"Ivy was very helpful," wrote one patient after their health care visit. "She made me feel VERY COMFORTABLE and helped me through a very hard time."

"It's all about respect and dignity and treating patients as you want to be treated," stated Ivy who is also certified with the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) for counseling around topics such as healthy relationships, safer sex, safe environments, and peer pressure with patients who are intellectually challenged. **Her compassion pours over the community, her patients, and PPSNE.**

"There's always someone coming through the door that needs someone to listen to them," said Ivy. "I had a young man who saw me a few months ago who told me I was like his Auntie. I've never been called that before. He was in his late 20's, a different race, different culture, and he opened up to me. **He needed to talk about sex. He was a virgin and I told him it was okay to be a virgin. We talked about masturbation, why he's waiting to have sex, and how to protect himself if and when he decides to have sex.** That was what he needed to hear. He was grateful."

Although the future of health care is ever-changing, one thing remains the same: the Waterbury community can count on Ivy Vazquez.

Volunteers Help Us Help Patients

Amazing people give their time and talents to PPSNE patients and staff.

It's a Saturday morning and large crowds of protesters have gathered at Planned Parenthood health centers across Connecticut and Rhode Island to harass and intimidate patients, staff, and visitors. This scene plays out every Saturday and also many days throughout the week. **Thankfully, we have fierce volunteers who stand up for people who want to access the sexual and reproductive health care services we provide.**

Through the crowds, our Welcome Crews greet patients with a friendly smile, wave to our staff, and maintain a presence that our patients and staff find emboldening and uplifting.

PPSNE volunteers are passionate advocates for sexual and reproductive rights and health, in every community we serve. **We have about 300 volunteers and students in various programs, ranging from the Welcome Crews to patient assistance and office support** in the administrative offices and 17 health centers.

Each year, National Volunteer Appreciation Month is recognized in April. This annual event offers another chance for us to show our appreciation and say "thank you" in person. **With deep-seated gratitude and appreciation, PPSNE will recognize volunteers through celebrations in New Haven, Stamford, and Providence.**

We feel the support and dedication of our volunteers every day and in every aspect of work. From the Doula Project, to Sexual Assault Forensic Examiners (SAFE), to Welcome Crew - the time, skill, commitment, and dedication of our volunteers help us help patients.

There are many ways you can give your time, skills, and talents to support PPSNE. Ready to get involved?

Email volunteers@ppsne.org to find the volunteer opportunity that best suits you.



Providence Welcome Crew members traveled to New Haven to meet New Haven Welcome Crew members and ensure PPSNE patients have a positive experience. That's radical volunteering!

PPSNE Information

Headquarters: 203.865.5158
ppsne.org

Call 1.800.230.PLAN (7526) to
reach the center nearest you

345 Whitney Avenue
New Haven, CT 06511

175 Broad Street
Providence, RI 02903

Connect With Us



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#IStandWithPP

Show your support by making a contribution today at **ppsne.org/donate or call 203.865.5158**