



Memo

Let's Get It Started: Kick-off the 2006 Legislative Session with a Day of Advocacy on January 24

Join hundreds of pro-choice advocates from around the state at Family Planning Advocates' Day of Advocacy at the State Capitol on Tuesday, January 24.

The Day of Advocacy is FPA's first opportunity of the 2006 legislative session to meet with state legislators to voice support for family planning funding and comprehensive sex education.

Contact your local Planned Parenthood office to register for the Day of Advocacy and set up legislative appointments in Albany. Or call FPA at (518)436-8408 for more information.

FPA's Annual Conference, which has traditionally been held in January, has been moved to April 3-4 this year. **The Day of Advocacy**, on January 24, will ensure that FPA's strong legislative agenda is introduced early in the session.

Reproductive Rights Advocates Honored at FPA's Annual Meeting

Karen Pearl Reports on Her First Year as the Leader of Planned Parenthood's National Organization

Planned Parenthood Federation of America Interim President Karen Pearl addressed FPA's 2005 Annual Meeting at the Marriott Hotel in Albany November 17. FPA members warmly welcomed Pearl, who has attended many past Annual Meetings in her former position as president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of Nassau County.

Pearl, who is completing her first year as the leader of Planned Parenthood's national organization, recounted her role in supporting and advancing women's health care, while managing monumental challenges to reproductive rights in 2005. She addressed questions about the changing composition of the Supreme Court and *Ayotte v. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England*, one of the first reproductive rights cases to be taken up by the Court since John Roberts became Chief Justice.

"In *Ayotte*, the U.S. Supreme Court is reviewing the long-standing requirement that any law restricting abortion must include protections for women's health," explained Pearl. She also addressed the parental notification aspect of the New Hampshire law in question:

"The fact is that most parents are already aware and involved when a daughter has an unintended pregnancy. Parents want their daughters' health to be in the hands of doctors, not judges, as the recent defeat of Proposition 73 in California bears out."



Planned Parenthood Interim President Karen Pearl greeted long-time reproductive rights activist and writer Mary Kahl, PhD, at FPA's Annual Meeting. Kahl is the author of "Controversy and Courage: Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood from 1934 to 2004," a fascinating history of one community's struggle to enable women to control their own childbearing.

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President's Column

Dear Friends,

Mother Nature finally won out.

Upstate New York's inclement weather has prevented many of our dedicated advocates from attending FPA's Annual Conference. So we changed the date of the Conference – which has been held in January for more than 25 years – to April 3-4 in anticipation of a strong showing for this exciting event in Albany in the spring.

Many of us still plan to brave the elements to ensure that we have a solid presence in the Capitol to introduce our priorities at the start of the legislative session. Your participation in the January 24 Day of Advocacy will be critical to establishing our pro-active agenda.

If you cannot make the trip to Albany in January, your local Planned Parenthood is eager to work with you to make contact with your legislators in their district offices.

Please pick up the phone today and tell your state representatives that reproductive health care is important to you. At the top of our 2006 legislative agenda are:

The Healthy Teens Act, which will establish a competitive grant program to fund age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education for young people in New York State.

The Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act, which will enable women to obtain emergency contraception (EC) from pharmacists and nurses through collaborative agreements with physicians.

Fully funding New York's family planning centers so that all clients can access the best possible products and services, regardless of their ability to pay.

We have an exciting year ahead of us and I look forward to great accomplishments with your continued support and involvement.

Sincerely,

JoAnn M. Smith
President and CEO

Dr. Susan Wood and Marge Piercy to Speak at FPA's Annual Conference in April

Mark April 3-4 on your calendar for FPA's Annual Conference in Albany. Both Dr. Susan Wood and author Marge Piercy already have!

Dr. Susan Wood has been a highly sought-after speaker since resigning from her position as the FDA's assistant commissioner for Women's Health and director of the Office of Women's Health over the agency's handling of Plan B. She appeared on *60 Minutes* and many news outlets to tell the sad truth about the interference of politics in U.S. public health policy at the Food and Drug Administration.

In addition to her involvement in many of the major progressive movements of our time, Marge Piercy has been praised as one of the few American writers who are accomplished poets as well as novelists. Her new book, *Sex Wars*, is getting great reviews. This historical novel set in 19th century New York City involves reproductive health controversies that are far from resolved today.

These inspiring speakers will headline an exciting conference agenda. Further information will be available on FPA's website at www.fpaofnys.org.



Dr. Susan Wood will address FPA's Annual Conference on April 3 at the Empire State Convention Center in Albany.

Reproductive Rights Advocates Honored *continued from page 1*

Three extraordinary reproductive rights activists were also honored at FPA's Annual Meeting:

Hon. Constance Cook, the former New York State Assemblymember who led the fight to reform the state abortion law in 1970, was presented with FPA's Alfred F. Moran Public Advocacy Award by Scott Heyman, CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes.

Dr. Irene Sills, a pediatrician and devoted women's health activist and scholar received The Rev. Beatrice Blair Courageous Service Award from Rabbi Don Cashman, an FPA and Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood board member.

Jen Wylegala, the former executive director of the New York Chapter of the Republican Majority for Choice, was presented with The Shirley Gordon Public Policy Leadership Award by Marty Blumenstock, executive director of Yates Family Planning Center in Penn Yan.

The program was moderated by FPA Board Chair Catherine Abate. FPA President and CEO JoAnn M. Smith presented FPA's 2005 Annual Report and introduced new board members for 2006.



Jen Wylegala, Dr. Irene Sills and former Assemblymember Constance Cook were honored by FPA President JoAnn M. Smith and FPA Board Chair Catherine Abate at FPA's 2005 Annual Meeting.

Around New York

FPA Helps Launch the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum's Agenda for Action

FPA is one of several groups that contributed expertise to a new report released by National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) entitled, *Reclaiming Choice, Broadening the Movement: Sexual and Reproductive Justice and Asian Pacific American Women, A National Agenda for Action*. The report is a culmination of work by activists who are dedicated to ensuring that Asian Pacific American (APA) women's experiences are incorporated into the national dialogue about sexual and reproductive rights. The Agenda highlights the challenges that APA women face in obtaining basic reproductive healthcare services and provides policy recommendations to address these issues.

FPA Takes a Proactive Approach to Ensure that Scripts Are Filled at Pharmacies

FPA has been working with the New York State Board of Pharmacy and the Pharmacists Society of the State of New York to ensure timely access to legally prescribed medications, including contraceptives. As incidents of pharmacists refusing to fill scripts are rising across the country, FPA is working proactively to ensure that women in New York State can get needed medications in a timely manner.

Planned Parenthood Welcomes New Staff

Lisa Anchin, Stand Up for Choice Coordinator, Planned Parenthood of Nassau County
Sonja Puffer, RN, Director of Patient Services, Planned Parenthood of South Central New York
Kaelyn Rich, VOX Recruiter and Liaison, Planned Parenthood of the Rochester/Syracuse Region

Campus Connection

Students from Adelphi University, Hofstra University and SUNY-Old Westbury made more than 600 calls to help defeat California's Proposition 73. They are now busy surveying public high schools for a sex education study being conducted by Planned Parenthood of Nassau County with the New York Civil Liberties Union.

SUNY-Albany's VOX group hosted a screening of *The Abortion Diaries* in November. More than 100 students attended this event, which included a question and answer session with the film's director and producer, Penny Lane.

An art show was held at Sarah Lawrence College to raise awareness of pharmacist refusals and access to contraception. "Art for Filling" featured two Planned Parenthood speakers and opportunities for creative pro-choice activism.

From the Hill

FPA and Planned Parenthood Oppose Samuel Alito for Supreme Court

Judge Samuel Alito is a wholly unsuitable choice to replace Justice Sandra Day O'Connor on the Supreme Court. Judge Alito opposes basic constitutional guarantees for women's health and privacy, including a woman's right to abortion and access to birth control. If confirmed, he could become the key vote to reverse fundamental rights upon which we have relied for almost two generations. Confirmation hearings for Samuel Alito are scheduled to begin in the Senate on January 9.

New York Supports Fight for the Supreme Court in Maine

Family Planning Advocates and New York State Planned Parenthoods are sharing their activists' enthusiasm with Maine to fight the current Supreme Court battle. Volunteers are working to help Maine residents connect with their Senators in the effort to preserve *Roe v. Wade*.

Decision Awaited in *Ayotte v. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England*

Oral arguments in *Ayotte v. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England* were heard by the Supreme Court on November 30, 2005. The new "Roberts' Court" was asked to decide whether a New Hampshire abortion restriction must include protections for women's health. This decision will determine whether a doctor will be able to perform a timely abortion when a woman's health is in danger.

Medicaid Services at Risk

After weeks of trying to merge House and Senate bills on Medicaid, the Senate passed a bill which will allow states to exclude family planning from Medicaid coverage. For many years, federal law protected coverage for family planning services in Medicaid and the elimination of this protection could dangerously impact the health of low-income Americans.

FPA Albany Memo

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Strengthening Cultural Competency Among Family Planning Providers

The 2000 Census documented that 20% of New York State's population is foreign-born; approximately two million foreign-born women need access to culturally and linguistically competent reproductive health care services. In response to this growing diversity, the Education Fund of FPA initiated a two-year cultural competency assessment project with funding from the Ford Foundation and SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective to build the capacity of family planning providers to better serve immigrant women.

The Education Fund conducted cultural competency assessments at Planned Parenthood Mohawk Hudson's Utica Center and Planned Parenthood of New York City's Boro Hall Center. Family Planning Advocates continues to provide technical support to both centers to develop and implement strategies to deliver high quality reproductive health care to diverse communities. A third assessment will take place at Community Healthcare Network in New York City.

The assessments have been received with great enthusiasm from both family planning providers and leaders in the field of cultural competency. A statewide conference to present the assessment process, tools, findings and lessons learned is planned for this summer.



FPA's Director of Public Policy Karen Anderson presented the findings of a cultural competency assessment to staff at Planned Parenthood New York City (PPNYC) with Nellie Santiago-Rivera, director of PPNYC's Boro Hall Center in Brooklyn.

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