

Voices for Choice

► Her Decision, Her Health ►

January is the month when we look back at the old year and into the new. So far 2012 with its news coverage in which a woman's right to choose has been constantly discussed feels like the very difficult 2011 all over again. Last year the House held more anti-choice votes than in any year since 2000 and states discussed over 160 new provisions related to reproductive health and rights. A number of radical anti-choicers aren't just opposed to abortion but to birth control and comprehensive sex education, too!

Three topics—insurance coverage of abortion, restriction of abortion after a specific point in gestation and ultrasound requirements—are topping the agenda in several states. “Fully 49% of these new laws seek to restrict access to abortion services, a sharp increase from 2010, when 26% of new laws restricted abortion. The 80 abortion restrictions enacted this year are more than double the previous record of 34 abortion restrictions enacted in 2005—and more than triple the 23 enacted in 2010. All of these new provisions were enacted in just nineteen states.”(Guttmacher Institute)

It's distressing for me to envision voters in many states enthusiastically listening to speeches calling for the overturning of Roe v Wade. What's the likely scenario going forward? Will the crowds get even bigger and be more in favor of limiting choice or health care options for women? Will that ideological agenda expand and put reproductive freedom in even greater jeopardy? As supporters of choice and

womens' rights we'll need to be ever stronger in our dedication to protecting Roe and access to health care.

We must never go back! We have to remember the impact of the Roe decision.

“In disallowing many state and federal restrictions on abortion in the United States, the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision prompted a national debate that continues today, about issues including whether and to what extent abortion should be legal, who should decide the legality of abortion, what

methods the Supreme Court should use in constitutional adjudication, and what the role should be of religious and moral views in the political sphere. Roe v. Wade reshaped national politics, dividing much of the United States, while activating grassroots movements on both sides.” (Wikipedia)

Grassroots means you and me and the determined men and women who understand the current threat to reproductive freedom. As many as 12 states are now pursuing personhood initiatives, even after the unexpected defeat of a personhood amendment in Mississippi. There are two personhood initiatives now collecting signatures in California.

No matter what anti-choice extremists try to do, we are counting on you to resist, be more outspoken, informed, and active. You are the strength of our pro-woman, pro-family and pro-reproductive healthcare movement. Join with Citizens for Choice to educate, inform, and advocate for choice, healthcare access and comprehensive sex education in 2012!

Sharon O'Hara, Vice President for Programs

Choice!

Privacy, liberty, individual rights:

**Tomorrow is the 39th anniversary of
Roe v Wade, Jan. 22, 1973**

Legislators and special-interest groups across the county are working hard to limit women's access to healthcare clinics, contraception, comprehensive sex education and abortion. The prospect of losing these basic rights is greater now than in many decades. Please support women's reproductive freedom!

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www.aauwnevadacounty.org

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www.bpwnevadacounty.org

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Pro-Choice Advances Amid Eroding Rights By Elaine Sierra

Proponents of reproductive choice, take heart. Despite the many nationwide efforts to chip away at women's right to choose under *Roe v. Wade*, there are recent successes supporting reproductive rights and health.

A major focus of advocates this year has been expanding insurance coverage for birth control. That advocacy paid off. It was announced this month that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) will issue final regulations under the Affordable Care Act, specifying women's preventive health services that must be covered without co-payments or deductibles. Those regulations will require most employers to provide insurance plans that cover contraception. Religious organizations, such as churches, that object on doctrinal grounds, are exempted. However, calls to expand the exemption to employers such as religiously-affiliated colleges or hospitals were rejected. Nancy Northup, president and CEO of the Center for Reproductive Rights, stated in response that, "Women should never be denied access to preventive health services simply because of the religious beliefs of their employers. The Obama Administration has taken a huge step in the right direction by recognizing women's fundamental right to a full range of affordable reproductive health care." The new mandate will go into effect for most employee insurance plans in August 2012, while religiously-affiliated organizations that do not currently cover contraception must comply by August 2013.

Another potential advance in contraceptive access was stymied, when HHS reversed the (FDA) rule extending over-the-counter access to Plan B (the morning after pill) to minors. The practical effect extends beyond minors' access, since Plan B must be kept behind the counter and requires pharmacist verification of age before dispensing it.

In California, which has perhaps the best reproductive health and rights record of all the states, two new laws will improve reproductive health outcomes. One expands minors' access to preventive care for sexually transmitted diseases. The second fosters access to prenatal care by requiring maternity coverage in individual insurance plans.

Maintaining access to the full range of reproductive health services in our state, especially for the uninsured and underinsured, is jeopardized by seemingly intractable budget shortfalls. Spending cuts for health and human services, as well as education, have been drastic. The most recent round of state budget cuts may result in increases in Medi-Cal co-pays and a reduction in the Medi-Cal reimbursement rate, which could lead to fewer healthcare providers serving Medi-Cal patients. Governor Jerry Brown is proposing a ballot measure for the November, 2012 election that would seek to address the problem of insufficient revenues by extending 2011 tax rates and temporarily increasing the sales tax.

Several anti-choice initiative measures have also been proposed for the 2012 election. We will be closely monitoring them should they qualify for the ballot. One is yet another version of prior parental notification initiatives. Another follows the lead of several other states in seeking to enshrine legal fetal personhood.

We'd like to give a shout out to all the Activists for Choice Team members who have taken action in 2011. Your efforts resulted in significant pro-choice victories. If you are not a member of the Team, but would like to be, drop us an email.

Your Public Policy Team
Elaine, Sharon, Cece and Judy

Citizens for Choice thanks the following donors whose generous donations were received between Oct. 15, 2011 & Jan. 14, 2012

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▶▶▶ Becoming Aware ▶▶▶

January is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

HPV (Human papillomavirus) infection is the most common sexually transmitted disease — between 75 percent and 80 percent of females and males in the U.S. will be infected at some point. Most will have no ill effects but for some, infections lead to warts or cervical, vaginal and vulvar cancers in women and anal cancers in men and women. A growing body of evidence suggests that HPV also causes throat, neck and head cancers as a result of oral sex.

HPV infections cause about 12,000 cancers and 4,000 deaths for women and 7,000 cancers in men yearly. Most women who die of cervical cancer never had regular Pap tests, had false-negative results, or did not receive proper follow-up.

Many advocacy groups are raising the profile of cervical cancer prevention as a national reproductive justice and women's health priority; and pushing for greater access to the tools and care needed to prevent, detect, and eventually end cervical cancer.

HPV vaccines do not protect against all types of HPV associated with cervical cancer, and it is currently unclear how long they remain effective or whether booster shots will be needed to maintain protection throughout adulthood. The vaccine loses effectiveness if it is given after the onset of sexual activity. More than one in five youths have had vaginal sex by the age of 15, surveys show.

Regular Pap tests among sexually active women are essential for cervical cancer prevention. Resources should not be diverted away from Pap screening programs to pay for the unusually expensive cervical cancer vaccine. Because Merck marketed Gardasil with a campaign that unnecessarily frightened girls, young women, and parents, many people now have a distorted view of this disease, the vaccine, and the continued importance of Pap screening.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended in 2006 that girls and young women ages 11 to 26 should be vaccinated, but vaccination rates in the United States have so far been disappointing.

By October 2011 only about 1 percent of boys had received the HPV vaccine. In October 2011 the committee recommended that boys and young men (ages 11-26) should be vaccinated against HPV to protect against anal and throat cancers that can result from sexual activity.

Vaccinating boys is cost effective when vaccination rates in girls are relatively low, which they are now. Fewer than half of girls between the ages of 13 and 17 have received at least one dose of the HPV vaccine, and fewer than a third have received all three doses.

In the U.S., economic and racial disparities are evident in statistics for cervical cancer. African-American and Native-American women are twice as likely to die of the disease as are white women. A study has shown that Hispanic women are 1.5 times more likely to die from cervical cancer as compared to non-Hispanic whites. Disparities are due, at least in part, to women of color having less access to Pap screening and health care. It is quite possible that those women with the highest rates of cervical cancer will also have less access to Pap screening and to the HPV vaccine. Until our health care system addresses such disparities in access, girls and women likely to benefit the most from this vaccine may well not be able to choose it.

The District of Columbia and dozens of states have introduced legislation to require, fund, or educate the public about the HPV vaccine. Unfortunately, many girls in underserved communities (where HPV infection rates are often high) have less access to both the Pap test and the HPV vaccine.

To reduce disparities for Latinas and other underserved women, systemic changes in our health care system will be needed to increase access to screening and vaccinations for those who need it most. To ensure more equal access to any adolescent vaccine, adequate infrastructure and resources must be made available.

Resources: CDC.gov; cancer.gov; Wikipedia; New York Times (10/25/11) ; Our bodies Our blog of the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (1/13/12)

In this issue

1

▶ Her Decision, Her Health

2 Public Policy

▶ Pro-Choice Advances Amid Eroding Rights

3

▶ Becoming Aware

4 C.H.O.I.C.E.S.

▶ Connecting Health Options, Individual Choices and Educational Services at Sierra College, Grass Valley

▶ Trust Women Week in San Francisco

▶ Survey

5

▶ Sex Ed Coalition Releases New Guidelines for Curriculum

▶ Donations by eScrip

6

▶ Majority Opinion

▶ Many Thanks

▶ ACCESS

7

▶ New Direction Offered for Comprehensive Sexuality Education

▶ Calendar

▶ Another Perspective

▶▶▶ Trust Women Week in San Francisco ▶▶▶

Banners on lamp posts in San Francisco with messages like "Her Decision, Her Health" aim to spark conversations and to help build momentum and solidarity among supporters of women's rights, equality and autonomy and access to comprehensive health care, including reproductive health care services.

During Trust Women Week, January 20-27, we will engage the public in a Virtual March, with MoveOn, to express their support online for reproductive health, rights and justice.



The Trust Women/Silver Ribbon Campaign is a coalition of 42 national and local organizations. We include the groups represented on the banners: the Bay Area Coalition for Our Reproductive Rights (BACORR), Catholics for Choice, NARAL-ProChoice California, Planned Parenthood Shasta Pacific, and SisterSong/Trust Black Women.

▶▶▶ Survey ▶▶▶

Please give us a minute! Citizens for Choice and The Clinic! would like your help and feedback on our work and services. Please click on this link and take a quick customer satisfaction survey. Your opinion matters: www.surveymonkey.com/s/ZVX9ZTG Assessment and survey data is used to point us in the right direction for meeting the community's needs. THANKS for all YOU do to help protect and define reproductive freedom in Nevada County, in California, and at the Federal level!

▶▶ C.H.O.I.C.E.S. ▶▶

Connecting Health Options, Individual Choices and Educational Services at Sierra College, Grass Valley

By Shelby Mosel, President

Here's an update to all people curious about what C.H.O.I.C.E.S is up to these days. We have applied for the fourth time (all other three semesters were successful) to have Sierra College Nevada County Campus considered a GACC SafeSite.

GACC is The Great Condom Campaign-a youth-led movement to make the U.S. a sexually healthy nation. Every year GACC members give out a million Trojan Brand condoms on over eight hundred colleges or universities throughout 49 states and the District of Columbia.

Those sites lucky to be chosen receive a huge box of 500 condoms and are expected to educate their peers about sexual health and policies that affect young people's health and lives. Club members will distribute the 500 condoms received in the fall semester, host sexual health awareness events, and engage our peers in advocacy related to sexual and reproductive health issues.

Distributing condoms and other information on sexual health is an important part of Love Your Body Week- March 19-23rd -on the Sierra College Grass Valley campus. C.H.O.I.C.E.S club is doing many of the same activities planned at the much bigger Rocklin Campus. There will be a showcase of "Body Secrets", along with several booths, and a speaker. Arrangements are in the works to have showings of several outstanding documentaries in the college's Media Center. Love Your Body Week will be a fantastic event! I hope many of our readers will feel free to stop by and look at the "Body Secrets" display along with the many other displays on campus.

Baskets!

The following businesses and offices have graciously allowed us space in their store to display our informational baskets. We thank them!

Behind Closed Doors
BriarPatch
Cafe Mekka
Common Goals
CoRR (Community Recovery Resources)
DVSAC
Garrett Eckerling MD
Foggy Mountain Music
Good Times Skate Shop
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The Mine Shaft
Nito's T-shirts & Accessories
Renegade Classics
Serendipity
Sierra Care Physicians, Grass Valley
Sierra Care Physicians, Penn Valley
Sierra College Health Services
Sierra Family Medical Clinic
Sierra Mountain Coffee Roasters
Tribal Weaver
Valentina's Bistro and Bakery
WIC (Women, Infants, and Children Services)
Judi Wright MD
Yabobo
Yuba Docs



▶▶▶ Sex Ed Coalition Releases New Guidelines for Curriculum ▶▶▶

From the Republican Majority for Choice newsletter, January, 2012

During the 2nd week of January a coalition of health and education organizations released new recommendations for sexual education guidelines in an effort to reduce inconsistencies and inaccuracies taught in many public schools. The non-binding proposal encourages states and school districts to begin building a foundation early on, with age appropriate conversations about bullying, sex, anatomy and healthy relationships.

Groups who contributed to the new standards include American Association of Health Education, the American School Health Association, Advocates for Youth and many more. This sex-ed coalition understands that initiating age appropriate conversations with grade school students will result in more tolerant and healthy environments long-term. Additionally, in providing school systems with guidelines for basic sex-ed curriculum, the groups hope to encourage a more uniform approach for addressing such sensitive material.

Opponents of the proposed guidelines argue that such sensitive issues should be addressed at home, and not in school. However, numerous studies provided inarguable data that reveal significantly higher rates of unintended pregnancies occur in areas that do not teach comprehensive curriculums

▶▶ Donations by eScrip ▶▶

Citizens for Choice has enrolled in the eScrip Program that makes it easier for supporters to contribute more without doing anything extra. By using a store's loyalty card you can contribute up to 3% of your regular purchase amount. We are starting by using the SPD loyalty card. In the near future we will be including other cards and locations. It's easy and it's free. Pick up an SPD Community card and register it by calling 800 931-6258 or visiting www.escrip.com/SPD. Choose CITIZENS FOR CHOICE, then don't forget to use the card each time you shop at SPD.



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▶▶Majority Opinion ▶▶

Harold A. Blackmun was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court from 1970 until 1994. Blackmun's best known contributions are his abortion opinions, particularly those for the Court in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* (1973), in which, respectively, the justices invalidated criminal penalties for performing abortions and established the basic trimester framework for evaluating whether and when the state could impose restrictions on a woman's freedom to obtain an abortion.

This effectively invalidated the varying abortion statutes in 46 of the 50 states and provoked a moral, philosophical, and theological controversy that has seldom abated since that time. Blackmun found women's fundamental right to personal privacy in the Fourteenth Amendment's concept of personal liberty affording a woman protection in determining whether or not to terminate her pregnancy. The right, however, was not absolute, and he made clear that it could be regulated when the state's interest was "compelling." He set aside state laws requiring women to get the consent of a spouse or a parent before having an abortion (*Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth*, 1976.)

He was strongly committed to any woman's right to obtain an abortion and reacted strongly against the Court's upholding the government's refusal to provide Medicaid funding of abortions. The strength of his commitment continued through the many cases in which the Court dealt with states' efforts to limit abortion and was nowhere clearer than in his dissent in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services* (1989). There he attacked his colleagues for dismantling *Roe v. Wade* and for "cast[ing] into darkness the hopes and visions of every woman who had come to believe that the Constitution guaranteed her the right to exercise some control over her unique

ability to bear children," creating "inevitable and brutal consequences" with the government again able to intrude improperly into women's lives.

This is what Justice Blackmun wrote as the majority opinion on *Roe v. Wade*:
"The Court has recognized that a right of personal privacy, or a guarantee of certain areas or zones of privacy, does exist under the Constitution. In varying contexts, the Court or individual Justices have, indeed, found at least the roots of that right in the First Amendment; in the Fourth and Fifth Amendments; in the penumbras of the Bill of Rights; or in the concept of liberty guaranteed by the first section of the Fourteenth Amendment... This right of privacy... is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy."

References: Answers.com and Wikipedia

▶▶▶ Many Thanks ▶▶▶

Thank you, Judy Seabridge!

Our thanks go out to our Board member, Judy Seabridge, who served in 2011.

Judy joined the Board acting on her belief in reproductive rights and choice for all women and eager to assist with the programs of Citizens for Choice to positively affect the lives of women in our community.

She attended Reproductive Freedom Day, became an active supporter and contributed many ideas to further our mission.

Judy added her insight, business and creative skills to our marketing plans, the Comprehensive Sex Ed task force, and much more.

We sincerely wish her all the best with whatever new endeavors and adventures are in her future.

Thank you to our
Voices for Choice
contributors:

Charlotte Cammon
Leslie King
Liz Mantle
Shelby Mosel
Sharon O'Hara
Elaine Sierra

ACCESS

ACCESS is a grassroots organization working to make reproductive health and choice a reality for all women. Our Practical Support Network ensures that all can obtain safe abortion services without isolation or delay. If a woman cannot rely on her personal resources to get to a clinic, our network of 100+ volunteers can provide rides, overnight housing, child-care, translation and more. Our Women In Need Fund provides money to pay for hotel rooms and bus tickets when women must travel great distances to find care, and contributes to the cost of abortion so that women can obtain the procedure without delay.

www.accesswhj.org

800.376.4636

▶▶▶ New Direction Offered for Comprehensive Sexuality Education ▶▶▶

By Leslie King, Retired Public School Health and Family Life Educator

Public school children stand to benefit from comprehensive, sequential sex ed recommendations established by a coalition of six national health and education organizations and advocate groups. A series of key, age-appropriate benchmarks covering second grade through pre-college grade levels comes in the form of proposed National Standards released in early January. Sex, STI's, bullying and healthy relationships are specifically addressed. The aim is to inform and engage students in these topics before they have already formulated their own opinions and biases.

One example within the recommendations determines that "before college, students should comprehend how brain development impacts adolescence; define sexual consent; explain why threats or coercion in relationships is wrong; and compare and contrast laws surrounding pregnancy, adoption, abortion and parenting." (summarized in "National Partnership's Women's Health Policy Report" from AP/Miami Herald, 1/9). This plan is ground breaking and controversial but offers a guide for school districts and their communities to give timely, relevant instruction within the health/sex ed framework.

In October a Citizens for Choice sex ed task force met with Dr. Karen Milman, Director of Nevada County Health Department. Dr. Milman stated there is a need for better outreach and education for our county's young adults. Currently there is no consistency among schools in Nevada County in regard to teaching sex ed and related topics. Nevada Joint Union High School District is implementing changes however and will no longer use community based organization representatives as sexual health instructors. It is also revising its HIV/AIDS Prevention unit to meet state mandates. This will be in place this spring. Progress is in the works!

"When women do better, families do better."

(National Partnership for Women & Families)

"A woman knows what's best for herself and her family."

(CA Coalition for Reproductive Freedom)

▶▶▶ Calendar ▶▶▶

- January 22nd 39th Anniversary of Roe v Wade decision
- February 14th V-Day (movement to end violence against women & girls- vday.org)
- March 8th International Women's Day
- March 19-23 Love Your Body Week –Activities at Sierra College, GV campus
- March 20th** **SAVE THE DATE** 10th Annual Reproductive Freedom Day in Sacramento
- March 22nd Speaker Series at Sierra College Rocklin 12:30-2:00pm
Reproductive Justice: Does a Woman Have a Right to Choose?
Sen. Liz Figueroa (ret.) and Sharon O'Hara, 2 of 4 panelists
- Date TBA Stay tuned for our Spring/Summer Art Auction

Another Perspective

In his book, Here Comes Trouble, Michael Moore tells of his expulsion from the Catholic seminary during high school because he asked too many questions.

His background notwithstanding, he later found it necessary to take a good friend for an abortion out of state because Michigan was so backward. In a footnote to that incident, he writes: "I was a practicing Catholic...weird."

"I was a practicing Catholic ...But this is what I believed: Human life begins when the fetus can survive outside the womb. Until then, it is a form of life, but not a human being. A sperm is life...an egg is life, a fertilized egg is life, a fetus is life---but none of these are a human being, none of these are human life—just as a seed or a stem is not a flower. When you are born, you are a human being. That's why your driver's license lists your birthday as the day you came out of your mother's womb, not the day you were conceived. Some people, I guess, just like to be the uterus police, the bossypants of other women's reproductive parts. And that has always struck me as really, really weird."

▶▶▶ IT'S ALL LOCAL! ▶▶▶

"We are able to make change by listening to women, figuring out what's right pointing out what's wrong, and being fearless in our willingness to insist that those in power respond to women's concerns" Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel and Dimed*.

While politicians speak about limiting healthcare, Citizens for Choice is standing up for the uninsured and underinsured here in western Nevada County. We're here for the college student who comes to The Clinic! since the health center on campus is closed and we're here for the high school couple who want to get practical advice about safe sex but can't talk to their parents...

With your support and financial backing we'll continue to be here providing trustworthy, unbiased information and advocating for reproductive justice!

Looking ahead at the coming threats to abortion rights which may be on California's ballot in November 2012, your donations will make it possible for us to stand up for choice by advocating at all levels of government against those who'd limit our reproductive freedom.

Can we count on YOU to make a generous contribution in the next month?

Please share this newsletter-an easy way to double our circulation and exposure!

▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶ www.citizensforchoice.org