

Reproductive Health & Wellness Program



## THIS ISSUE

- *CHD Infant Vitality Brown Bag Series starts!*
- *Company raises price of common HIV drug by 4000%*

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## WE STAND WITH PLANNED PARENTHOOD



clinics have 30 days to appeal the state's decision. Abortion providers have long argued that these measures do not increase safety of an already safe procedure and are not medically necessary. Judge Michael Barrett ruled on Wednesday, September 30th that the 2 Cincinnati and Dayton area clinics may continue operations while the decision on the new variance law goes to court, suggesting that it is unconstitutional so the state may not enforce it.<sup>4</sup>

As a small group of congressional Republicans were threatening to attempt shutting down the government over funding of Planned Parenthood, a new study released shows that Americans support government funding of the organization by a margin of more than 2-1. 65% of those polled by USA Today/Suffolk University thought that funding should continue, and only 29% thought it should end.<sup>1</sup> The outrage surrounding Planned Parenthood stems from the fact that they perform abortions in some of their facilities, but this only accounts for about 3% of their total services, and none of the \$500 million of funding from the federal government is used for these services. Instead, that \$500 million provides basic cancer screenings, breast exams, treatment for gynecological issues, STI treatment and testing, standard gynecological exams, birth control, pap smears, and basic physical exams to women and men across the country, many of whom would not receive these services otherwise. The only federal funds that can legally be used for abortion are in cases of rape and incest, or if the life of the mother is threatened.

Once again, Cincinnati is at risk of becoming the largest metropolitan area in the country without a licensed abortion facility if state level policies are not altered. The same issue is threatening the Mt. Auburn Planned Parenthood and Women's Med Center in Kettering as the last time these clinics nearly closed. The state health department notified the clinics last week that their licenses would be revoked without the required variance approval, and that approval was being denied. Without approval, these providers will be forced to close. Surgical centers are required to have transfer agreements and admitting privileges in place with local hospitals in case of emergencies, but Planned Parenthood has cited "hospitals' religious and political opposition to abortion"<sup>3</sup> as reasons that these transfer agreements have been unattainable. A new part of the variance regulation states that variance requests to the state will be automatically denied if the state does not respond within 60 days, creating further barriers to the provision of safe abortion in Cincinnati. The potential work-around is having a backup physician, which Planned Parenthood thinks it can provide, and both

Tuesday, September 29th was National Pink Out Day. Planned Parenthoods across the country offered free STI testing at mobile sites, including one at Ben's Chili Bowl in Washington, DC. The Cincinnati location offered free testing from 2-5pm at the intersection of Vine Street and Garfield Place. National Pink Out Day is coinciding with the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing, that included testimony from Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards.<sup>5</sup> This is the first time a representative of Planned Parenthood has been allowed to speak in that kind of forum since highly edited videos were released this summer that made it seem like the organization was selling fetal tissue for profit. The hearing came with plenty of interruptions from the Committee when Ms. Richards attempted to speak, false allegations, insistence that federal money is not needed to run the large non-profit organization and even powerpoint slides generated by the Committee chair with information that came from the same group that released the videos this summer. It was, by no means, a fair or unbiased session to gather information.

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Instead, it has been called a “freak show,” “a farce,” and “inexcusable.” Those words came from pro-life critics of Planned Parenthood and were posted on Twitter.<sup>6</sup>

In reality, any tissue collected is donated with consent by the woman who is terminating her pregnancy, and any funds exchanged are for the storage and transport of the tissue. The organization makes no profit and incurs similar costs associated with any other tissue donation, but the videos have been used to justify congressional plans to defund the largest provider of reproductive health care in the country. This is certainly not the first attack on Planned Parenthood, but many fail to realize that use of fetal tissue in science has been taking place since the 1930s and played a critical role in the development of the polio vaccine. More recently the tissue has been used in research that seeks to treat cancer and Parkinson’s disease.<sup>7</sup> States such as Indiana, South Dakota, Massachusetts and many others investigated their Planned Parenthood surgical centers to see if any wrongdoing occurred, and found that no tissue donation activity taking place was illegal. Louisiana even investigated Planned Parenthood locations that do not perform abortions to see if they were donating fetal tissue.<sup>8</sup> Somehow, the \$30-\$100 that is exchanged for handling fees of each sample from only 1% of all the existing Planned Parenthood locations<sup>2,9</sup> does not seem to merit all of the state run investigations or the many federal hearings that have taken place. As this process goes on, it becomes clear that this is another way to attack Planned Parenthood.

The federal funding in question is primarily Title X funding. This is the same pocket of money that funds the Reproductive Health and Wellness Program housed here at the Cincinnati Health Department. The regulations attached to this money prohibit performing abortions, and the money is used to provide free or discounted services to the men and women that need them the most, and probably wouldn’t have access otherwise. We stand with Planned Parenthood.

## HIV drug price increased

The drug Daraprim is a drug has long been used to treat infections in people with compromised immune systems, many of whom have HIV or AIDS. It was originally developed to treat toxoplasmosis parasites contracted from meat, unwashed produce and cat feces. The parasite can have serious implications for vulnerable immune systems of the elderly, infants, pregnant women, some cancer patients, and those with HIV/AIDS, and is especially dangerous to pregnant women. This drug was recently purchased by Turing Pharmaceuticals and the young CEO of the company, Martin Shkreli, decided to inflate the price by 4000 percent. This made it inaccessible to virtually everyone. The drug is old enough that in recent years it cost about \$1 per pill, but has steadily increased since 2010. When it was sold in August, the drug cost around \$13.50 per pill. Turing raised the price to \$750 per pill.<sup>10</sup> Toxoplasmosis in healthy individuals can usually be cleared with a 6 week, 2 pill per day course of treatment, but those with immune deficiencies such as HIV/AIDS may need to take it continuously. That brings their yearly total for just ONE of the many drugs needed to maintain health with a suppressed immune system to \$634,500.<sup>10</sup>

After the very public outrage at this price inflation the company reduced the price, while Shkreli claimed the price hike had been necessary to make the drug profitable for future research. Despite stating that it was an infection that impacted so few people each year, he also claimed he did it to eradicate toxoplasmosis. The new cost has not been released at this time, but according to experts, further research is not necessary. In an interview with NBC News, Dr. Carlos del Rio of Emory University stated “This is a drug that has no major side effects... it’s usually very well tolerated. It’s not a patient population that is clamoring for a better drug.<sup>10</sup>” In addition, Turing received a letter from The Infectious Disease Society of America and the HIV Medicine Association, criticism from presidential candidates, and backlash from Congressional representatives. Shkreli in particular made this a big news story when he initially stated he would not lower the price and called a journalist a “moron” on social media. Although this is not the first time the price of a very common drug has been grossly inflated, his apparent arrogance and position as a former hedge fund manager seemed to anger the public. Ideally, this will lead to closer inspection of the pricing of life saving drugs in the future, and closer oversight of pharmaceutical companies who seek to make a profit on new (and often old) drugs.

## First Step Home

The RHWP has established a link with a local organization called First Step Home. The program focuses on women in chemical dependency treatment or recovery and their children, providing individual counseling and group meetings about chemical dependency, sexuality, relationships, taking care of yourself, life planning, and spirituality. In addition, they provide residential services, life skills training, parenting classes, child care, enhanced access to medical care, twelve step meetings, mental health services, and vocational training. Women complete the residential portion of their treatment and can follow it up with outpatient treatment and transitional housing with other women who are in treatment and their children. They receive 18 months of follow up, support, and after care to ensure successful recovery. They also talk about preventing relapse, abuse, mental health, parenting, empowerment, wellness, and many other topics pertinent to recovery. It is unique in that it is a residential treatment facility that permits mothers to stay with their children while they’re going through treatment, helping to keep children out of the foster care system. They also work with women who don’t have children, are pregnant, have criminal justice involvement, and have history of abuse. According to their website, they have served 2,900 women and 1,800 children in the past 19 years.

Dr. Mooney met with groups of women two times last month to discuss reproductive life planning, contraception options, condom use and negotiation, healthy relationships, and answered any questions they had. It also served as a training session for their staff, who will continue these discussions with future groups. The women were excited for the new information and engaged in conversation, asking questions and telling stories of their experiences. This will be a great partnership going forward, allowing these women quick and easy access to much needed reproductive health services in our health centers after receiving reproductive health information in group settings!

## Infant Vitality Brown Bag Series #1

Last month we held the first Infant Vitality Brown Bag session! It focused on maternal & prenatal education and was very informative! With around 20 people in attendance, we discussed the relationship between reproductive health outcomes and education during the pre-conceptional, prenatal, and postpartum periods. During the discussion we touched on a number of interesting topics: the value of touch (yes that's right, we're talking about skin-to-skin contact!), dealing with stress during the lifecourse, the importance of spacing pregnancies out to regenerate both biological and social resources, the contributions of men to the reproductive process, and the structure of labor relations and its effect on breastfeeding access for working moms! We talked about postpartum depression/baby blues that both moms and dads experience. We're building a community that can promote action at these sessions, and we want to hear your voice!

The next brown bag session will be on November 20th in the 1st floor auditorium at CHD's headquarters (3101 Burnet Avenue). It is scheduled for 11:30am to 1:00pm. It will be focused on "Resources for Pregnant Women & Mothers".

**Please remember that you should bring your own lunch to these sessions! (We're putting all the pizza money into services for women from the community!)**

## MEN'S HEALTH

Interested in the Men's Health Initiative for your organization? Contact the program coordinator: [eric.washington@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:eric.washington@cincinnati-oh.gov)

## TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: LESLEY BARRY

**Name:** Lesley Barry

**Hometown:** Plymouth, Michigan

**Favorite movie/book and why:**

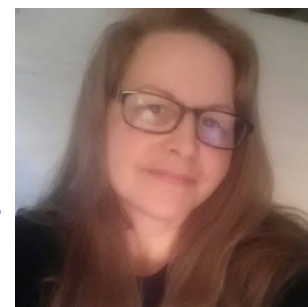
**Movie:** The Notebook, I am a romantic at heart.

**Book:** Bible it increases my faith and encourages me to do good and keep a positive attitude.

**What do you do for thebodyshop?** Help out when needed.

**What do you love about working in reproductive health?** Getting to help the underserved women with family planning and STI testing.

**When you're not at work, where might we find you?** At home playing with my Maltese puppy Bella, and spending time with my 17 year old daughter.



### Infant Vitality Brown Bag Series: Upcoming Schedule

2015

**November 20th:** Resources for Pregnant Women & Mothers- moderated by Betsy Buchanan, Director of WIC

2016

**January 15th:** The Chicken or the Egg Conundrum- moderated by Dr. Denise Saker MD, MPH

**March 18th:** The Truths Around Teens & Sex- moderated by Martha Walter, MS (almost!)

**May 20th:** Myth vs. Fact Around Family Planning

**July 15th:** Drivers for a Health Pregnancy

**September 16th:** Delivery & Postpartum Experiences

**November 18th:** Beyond the Hospital. Going Home with Baby

Each session will be moderated by a different person with a special interest or expertise in the topic of conversation. They are simply there to guide an informal conversation and keep topics focused, and a few starting questions are provided. Many session moderators are to be determined, so if you are interested in leading discussion around a specific topic, email Martha at [Martha.Walter@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:Martha.Walter@cincinnati-oh.gov). We look forward to seeing you at the next Infant Vitality Brown Bag session! Don't forget to bring your lunch!

The Men's Health Initiative performs health education seminars at local community-based organizations. We currently have seminars on the following topics:

**Reproductive Anatomy, Pregnancy, and Sexuality • STIs and Protecting Yourself • Relationships and Communication • Family Planning • Fatherhood • Puberty • Bullying**

# thebodyshop

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM

Reproductive Health Suite  
Clement Health Center  
Cincinnati Health Department  
3101 Burnet Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45229

RHWP Hotline:  
513-357-7341

Appointment scheduling through the CHD Call Center:  
513-357-7320



**The Reproductive Health and Wellness Program (RWHP) or the body shop**, is a five-year grant awarded by the Ohio Department of Health to the Cincinnati Health Department and is funded by the federal Title X program. The primary objective of this program is to provide access to contraceptives and reproductive health services to the men and women of Hamilton County, especially to the most underserved populations, so as to reduce the number of unplanned pregnancies, unwanted pregnancies, and ultimately, the number of poor pregnancy outcomes. Through these direct services, education and outreach, the program also hopes to cultivate a culture of responsibility, well-being, and empowerment in regards to sexuality and reproductive health. To date, we've enrolled thousands of individuals, and continue to grow, learn, and serve.

For additional information regarding the project, please contact Dr. Jennifer Mooney at:

[jennifer.mooney@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:jennifer.mooney@cincinnati-oh.gov)

**Make safer sex a priority this Halloween!**

**Don't forget to use your favorite method of birth control + a condom every time!**

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