



Monday *MONITOR*

Monday, January 12, 2009

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MISSOURI INAUGURATION DAY: CONGRATULATIONS!

Today marks a day to celebrate and congratulate our newly elected (and, re-elected), pro-women's health, statewide leadership: **Governor Jay Nixon, Secretary of State Robin Carnahan, State Treasurer Clint Zweifel, and Attorney General Chris Koster.** Despite the enormous challenges facing Missouri and this country, we now have statewide leadership that values information, will promote policies which support Missouri women and families, and that will put science, facts, and data before ideology.

MARGARET DONNELLY NOMINATED TO HEAD HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

We could not say it better than the Governor-elect: "Ensuring the health, safety and welfare of Missouri families and senior citizens is a top priority for my administration, and **Margaret Donnelly** is exactly the right person to take on this vital position..." In the House, Margaret was the ranking member on the Appropriations Subcommittee for Health and Senior Services, Mental Health and Social Services for two years and on the Budget Committee for four years. In addition, she also served on: Children and Families; Senior Security; Communications, Energy and Technology; the Joint Committee on MO HealthNet; ...the Joint Committee on Government Accountability [and]...the Medicaid Reform Commission. *[excerpted from Nixon press release, 1.07.09]* Congratulations, Margaret!

OPENING DAY SESSION REMARKS BY HOUSE SPEAKER AND SPEAKER PRO TEM

On Wednesday, both incoming **House Speaker Ron Richard** and **Speaker Pro Tem Bryan Pratt** committed to 'reducing the number of abortions in Missouri'. It is our fervent hope that both leaders can understand that the best—and safest—way to do this is to help our teens delay the onset of sexual activity by providing them with honest and complete information, and to help women prevent unintended pregnancies through better access to family planning services. And, that we would gladly work with them to accomplish it.

EMERY REFILES PHARMACY DENIAL BILL

Rep. Ed Emery (R-Lamar) filed **HB 226**, the Pharmacy Denial bill with the same language as 2008. This bill protects pharmacies that refuse to dispense hormonal contraceptives. The bill: deceitfully re-defines emergency contraception as an abortion drug; and, falsely suggests 'RU-486' is dispensed at pharmacies. In fact, Mifeprex ('RU-486') is available only under direct contract between the manufacturer and the abortion provider; there is no pharmacist middle man.

PROSTATE CANCER PREVENTION PILOT PROJECT

Sen. Robin Wright Jones (D-St. Louis) filed **SB144** to establish a pilot prostate cancer screening program for uninsured and low income men to be administered through local health departments and FQHCs.

ROE V. WADE 36TH ANNIVERSARY: HONORING CHAMPIONS & CELEBRATING CHOICE

- ◆ **KANSAS CITY:** Monday, January 19, 7:00pm at The Record Bar, 1020 Westport Road. Purchase tickets online at www.ppkm.org or contact Sarah at 913.312.5100 x245 or sarah.henderson@ppkm.org.
- ◆ **ST. LOUIS:** Thursday, January 22, 6:00—9:00pm at the Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road. Contact Angie at 314.531.7526 x 334; angie.postal@pplsr.org
- ◆ **SPRINGFIELD:** Thursday, January 22, 7:00pm at Mille's turn-of-the-century café, 313 S Jefferson. Contact Crystal at 417.883.3800 or crystal.brigman@ppslr.org
- ◆ **COLUMBIA:** Thursday, January 22, an exclusive film screening of "Vera Drake" at the RagTag Cinema. Reception at 6:30, film at 7:00. Contact Michelle at 573-424-8717 or michelle.trupiano@ppkm.org.

VIRGINITY PLEDGE DOESN'T STOP TEEN SEX

Jennifer Warner, WebMD Health News, Reviewed by Louise Chang, MD

Dec. 29, 2008—Teenagers who take virginity pledges are no less sexually active than other teens, according to a new study. But the results, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, suggest that **virginity pledgers are less likely to protect themselves against pregnancy or disease when they do have sex**. Researchers say the findings suggest that virginity pledges may not significantly affect teenagers' sexual behavior. Instead, they may decrease the likelihood of teenagers taking precautions, such as using a condom or using birth control, when they do have sex.

Researchers say the federal government spends about \$200 million annually on abstinence promotion programs, which include virginity pledges. Two previous studies have suggested that virginity pledges can delay sex, but researchers say those studies did not account for pre-existing differences between pledgers and non-pledgers. In this study, researchers compared the sexual behavior of 289 teenagers who reported taking a virginity pledge in a 1996 national survey to 645 non-pledgers who were matched on more than 100 factors, such as religious beliefs and attitudes toward sex and birth control.

The results showed that five years after taking the virginity pledge:

- 82% of pledgers denied ever having taken the pledge.
- Pledgers and matched non-pledgers did not differ in rates of premarital sex, sexually transmitted disease, and oral and anal sex behaviors.
- Pledgers had 0.1 fewer sexual partners in the past year but did not differ from non-pledgers in the number of lifetime sexual partners and the age of first sex.

The biggest difference between the two groups came in the area of condom and birth control use. The study showed that fewer pledgers used birth control or condoms in the past year or any form of birth control the last time they had sex. Researcher Janet Elise Rosenbaum, PHD, of Harvard University, says **the findings suggest that health care providers should provide birth control information to all teenagers, especially virginity pledgers**.

TEEN BIRTH RATES UP SIGNIFICANTLY AFTER 14 YEAR STEADY DECLINE

Last Wednesday, January 7 2009, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) released final birth data for 2006. As expected, the data confirm that the overall teen birth rate **increased 3%** between 2005 and 2006. **This represents the first increase in the US teen birth rate after 14 years of steady decline**. In addition, 26 states had a *statistically significant* increase in the teen birth rate, only 3 states and the District of Columbia had statistically significant decreases, and 22 state rates were essentially unchanged. **The rate in Missouri increased 8%, on a par with Alabama; only 8 states saw a larger increase.**

There is no single reason why the teen birth rate increased, just as there is no single factor influencing a teen's behavior at any given moment. However, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy notes, among other factors, that it may be due in part to an increase in the overall teen pregnancy rate rather than an increase of the proportion of pregnant teens who give birth. In addition, they suggest that earlier progress in reducing risky sexual behavior among teens has stagnated, perhaps even reversed.

"It may be that one of the nation's most extraordinary success stories of the past two decades is coming to a close," said Sarah Brown, CEO of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy. "Although teen pregnancy and birth rates have declined by about one-third since the early 1990s, many recent signs—including trends in teen sex and contraceptive use—seemed to have stalled or perhaps gone in the wrong direction. **Let's hope this sobering news on teen births serves as a wake up call to policymakers, parents, and practitioners that all our efforts to convince young people to delay pregnancy and parenthood need to be more intense, more creative, and based more on what we know works.**"

For more information, go to: www.thenationalcampaign.org