



# Monday *MONITOR*

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

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## **CHANGE WE CAN BELIEVE IN! CONGRATULATIONS PRESIDENT BARACK HUSSEIN OBAMA!!**

Following an historic train ride from Philadelphia to Wilmington to Baltimore to Washington DC, following the uplifting “We Are One” concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, and following a day of service honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, the world community prepares to witness the first African-American sworn in today as the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America. President Obama—who understands and respects the separation of church and state, who will lead with science not ideology—is already making good on his promises to reach out to all Americans so we can, together, form a more perfect union. It’s a new day!

## **TWO MORE PREVENTION BILLS FILED**

**Senator Jolie Justus** (D-Kansas City) filed **SB203**, the **Patient Protection at Pharmacies** bill that seeks to clarify the duty of pharmacies to fill all lawful prescriptions and to make sure that persons of legal age purchasing emergency contraception over-the-counter are served as they would be for any other OTC medicine, without discrimination or delay. And, **Representative Rachel Storch** (D-St. Louis) filed **HB285**, the **Expedited Partner Therapy** bill, which allows physicians to treat the partner of a patient diagnosed with Chlamydia or Gonorrhea without an existing physician/patient relationship in order to help curb the growing rate of sexually transmitted infections. The antibiotics would be dispensed in pill form and this essential public health policy would be limited to health districts with high case rates for the STIs.

## **CO-SPONSOR THE 2009 MISSOURI PREVENTION FIRST ACT**

**Senator Joan Bray** (D-St. Louis) and **Representative Beth Low** (D-Kansas City) are sponsoring companion versions of the **2009 Missouri Prevention First Act**. Last year, 14 restrictive bills were filed; most got at least a hearing if not also floor debate time while the Prevention First Act—promoting education and services that are proven to reduce unintended pregnancy and thus the number of abortions—never got a hearing. Please co-sponsor this important piece of legislation and help move it through both chambers.

## **KANSAS CITY “COUNTDOWN TO CHANGE” EVENT CELEBRATES CHANGE & CHOICE**

On Monday night, more than 75 supporters came out for the Young Friends ‘Countdown to Change’ event at The Record Bar in Westport. A lively line-up of local musicians and compelling speakers helped countdown the hours to a new administration and commemorate the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. Attendees sipped cleverly-named drink specials and enjoyed a delicious appetizer buffet while celebrating the imminent inauguration of President Obama, a long-time supporter of Planned Parenthood’s mission.

## **ROE V. WADE 36<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY: HONORING CHAMPIONS & CELEBRATING CHOICE**

- ◆ **ST. LOUIS:** Thursday, January 22, 6:00—9:00pm. The Ethical Society, 9001 Clayton Road. **Honor outgoing pro-choice champions** and welcome the new! Mix, mingle and enjoy a performance by **Summer Osborne**. Appetizers, dessert, coffee & wine. Contact Angie at 314.531.7526 x 334; [angie.postal@ppslr.org](mailto:angie.postal@ppslr.org)
- ◆ **SPRINGFIELD:** Thursday, January 22, 7:00pm at Millie’s turn-of-the-century café, 313 S Jefferson. Honor our first annual “**Champion of Choice**” **Representative Sara Lampe**. Appetizers, cash bar, & raffle. Contact Crystal at 417.883.3800 or [crystal.brigman@ppslr.org](mailto: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. Limited space available. Please contact Michelle at 573-424-8717 or [michelle.trupiano@ppkm.org](mailto:michelle.trupiano@ppkm.org).

## **LOOK FOR THE PRO-PREVENTION PRESENCE ON FEBRUARY 3**

Pro-choice and pro-prevention activists from across the state will meet in Jefferson City on Tuesday, February 3<sup>rd</sup> to deliver prevention petitions and to urge the legislature to Put Prevention First!

## **ST LOUIS CITY STILL FIRST IN NATION FOR 2 STI's; ST. LOUIS REGION IS 8<sup>TH</sup>**

You won't see it advertised on banners around the city, but St. Louis again ranks first in the country in occurrence of two sexually transmitted diseases. While the number of STIs has dropped, **the city still has more Gonorrhea and Chlamydia cases per capita than any county or independent city in the U.S.**, according to the latest annual report released Tuesday by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. **For the last decade, St. Louis has consistently ranked in the top five.**

"We're seeing the cases go down," said Pamela Rice Walker, acting director of the city of St. Louis Department of Health. "I think what we're doing is effective, it's just going to take a while to see even better results." In 2007, doctors reported 742 cases of Gonorrhea and 1,265 cases of Chlamydia for every 100,000 city residents, for a total of nearly 7,000 new diagnoses of both STIs. That's about 500 fewer than the year before. ... (T)he St. Louis *region* ranks eighth in both Gonorrhea and Chlamydia infection rates. That's an improvement from the 2006 rankings of fifth and sixth, respectively, but still comes in worse than Kansas City, Boston and Las Vegas.

"We still have a lot of disease to work with," said STI researcher Dr. Bradley Stoner, an associate professor of medicine at Washington University. "I hate seeing us at the top of the list every year." **The historically high rates of STIs in St. Louis can be attributed to a lack of access to health care and public awareness, Stoner said. About two-thirds of the city's STIs are diagnosed in people ages 15 to 24.**

The health department offers free testing and counseling and has taken STI prevention training to all of the city's high schools, middle schools and charter schools, said Pamela Rice Walker, acting director of the City of St. Louis Department of Health. **"Our recommendations are abstain, be monogamous, practice safe sex, but most importantly, get an annual physical,"** she said. "Kids at that age group don't need immunizations anymore and they tend to not go to the doctor."

While Chlamydia and Gonorrhea are the most common reported diseases in the U.S., it is thought that less than half the people who contract the diseases are diagnosed and treated. The diseases, which often have no symptoms, disproportionately affect women and African-Americans. Without treatment, the diseases can lead to infertility. Stoner points to the local anti-syphilis campaign in the 1990s as a success story that could be duplicated with Chlamydia and Gonorrhea. St. Louis used to be "the syphilis capital of the nation," he said, when the number of cases in the city reached a high of 908 in 1993. That dropped to a low of 11 by 2000. The numbers have crept up since then, with 112 diagnoses in 2007. The extensive public awareness campaign in the 1990s included syphilis information on billboards and bus signs. Mobile vans cruised the city offering free testing...

The city health department has recently tried new tactics for tackling the STI problem... A new drop-in clinic for young adults, the Spot, opened in September in the Central West End as a collaboration among Washington University, St. Louis Children's Hospital and other community partners. The clinic offers free counseling, testing, support groups and other programming. Chlamydia has been the most common STI among people who come to the Spot. Of the 182 people tested for the disease so far, 24 were positive... "We're hoping that prevalence decreases as people learn their own status," Whittington said. "If you don't know, get tested."  
*[excerpted from article by Blythe Bernhard, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, January 14 2009]*

## **PPSLR OFFERS FREE HIV TESTS & LOW COST STI TESTS FOR ANY ST. LOUIS AREA HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT FROM NOW THROUGH JUNE 30, 2009**

St. Louis is once again leading the nation in rates of chlamydia and Gonorrhea... This new information, coupled with the fact that one in four teenage girls is infected with a sexually transmitted disease – with rates as high as one out of every two African American teenage girls, reinforces the fact that more must be done to reduce these numbers in St. Louis. Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region will continue to offer **free HIV testing to any area high school student** with a valid student ID through June 30, 2009. **High school females can also receive free chlamydia, Gonorrhea and syphilis tests while males can receive the tests for \$25.** Normally these services would cost \$65 a person, but through generous new funding, Planned Parenthood is able to offer these services at dramatically reduced prices.

"Half of all teens are sexually active despite our state's support of abstinence-only sex education," says Mary Kogut, Vice President of Patient Services. "We need to make a bigger commitment to the teens in our community and it starts by offering tests and treatment at affordable costs and in a confidential setting." [...] Planned Parenthood offers all of its services on a sliding fee scale and in a confidential setting. St. Louis area teens are encouraged to call Planned Parenthood for more information about testing, and other sexual and reproductive medical services, including contraception and emergency contraception.  
*[excerpted from PPSLR press release, January 15, 2009]*