



Monday *MONITOR*

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Contact: Michelle Trupiano – 573.424.8717 (cell)

GOVERNOR'S SoS "PREVENTION & WELLNESS" SPEECH EXCLUDES...THE OBVIOUS

Governor Blunt, in his State of the State address, spent a great deal of time talking about his Medicaid reform scheme. In his references to healthcare, Gov. Blunt mentioned 'affordable healthcare' and 'prevention' several times, yet failed to once mention the most cost-effective and proven prevention program – family planning. He made a point of mentioning only one of his 3 anti-choice legislative priorities for this year: increasing funds to the "alternatives to abortion" program, something he has the most likelihood of winning. However, he deliberately avoided mentioning the other two priorities **because they are so unpopular with Missourians and failed last session**:

- 👉 Banning Planned Parenthood trained and expert sex educators from public schools
- 👉 Protecting pharmacists and pharmacy employees who deny women their birth control

Go to www.ppmissouri.org for the full text of the Governor's 2007 anti-choice priorities. **Note the victory achieved through last year's dogged constituent pressure...this year's statement regarding pharmacy denial no longer includes the medically inaccurate statement equating contraception with abortion NOR the blatant falsehood that RU486 is available through a pharmacist.**

3 NEW ASSAULTS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH: TOTAL OF 9 ANTI-CHOICE BILLS IN HOPPER

Sen. Scott (R-28) filed **SB 370**, the Targeted Regulation of Abortion Providers bill. This would require abortion providers who provide as few as five abortions per month – whether surgical or using medication – be licensed as an ambulatory surgical center. This does not improve health and safety, but rather will discourage physicians from providing abortions.

Sen. Koster (R-31) filed **SB 375**, the Alternatives to Abortion bill. Identical to a bill filed last year – and a priority in the Governor's State of the State address – SB375 provides services to pregnant women choosing to carry to term rather than have an abortion. Services continue for just one year. Despite the Governor's calls for a focus on prevention, the bill specifically excludes family planning services. The best alternative to abortion is not to get unintentionally pregnant; family planning can make that happen.

Rep. Davis (R-19) filed **HB 617**, the Parental Consent for Birth Control bill. HB617 would require a minor to obtain her parent's permission before receiving the safest forms of birth control. This year, Rep. Davis has added a stringent and complicated judicial bypass procedure to her bill. Planned Parenthood – and most adults – believe it is unlikely teens would go before a judge for birth control when they could simply have unsafe sex – which does not require parental or judicial permission.

Go to www.ppmissouri.org for a full bill listing and summary

ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Rep. Low (D-39) filed **HB 541**, the Insurance Coverage for HPV Cancer Screening bill. Supported by 21 colleagues, HB 541 requires health insurers to provide coverage for HPV testing and screening. At any time about 20 million people in the U.S. have HPV infections and between 10 and 15 million have high-risk types that are associated with cervical cancer. HPV is so common that about three out of four people have HPV at some point in their lives. Early detection of HPV saves thousands of lives each year.

HEARING IN SENATE RULES ON 'PREVENTION FIRST' RESOLUTION

SCR1 (Bray D-24) was heard Wednesday in Senate Rules. Amy Latham of the Missouri Family Health Council, ER nurse Patti Osgood, the PP affiliates in Missouri, ACLU-EM, NCJW St. Louis Section, RCRC, NARAL-PCM, and the Alliance for the Status of Women supported the resolution, Pam Fichter (MO-RTL) and Kerry Messer (MO Baptist Convention) opposed. No questions were asked of any witnesses....

FDA MEETING ON NEWER GENERATION HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES

Last week, the FDA Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee met to discuss the efficacy of current hormonal contraceptives. In an unusual step, the FDA issued a press statement on Tuesday night regarding news coverage of the meeting:

“Recent wire service stories about today's meeting of the FDA Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee have created misperceptions about the effectiveness of newer generation hormonal contraceptives. The stories inaccurately report that the products are significantly less effective at preventing pregnancy than those approved decades ago. In fact, the newer generation products are highly effective in preventing pregnancy. The stories also mistakenly state that FDA called the meeting to discuss the need for higher standards of efficacy for the newer products.

“In fact, as published in the Federal Register Notice announcing this meeting, the purpose of this two-day meeting is to discuss clinical trial designs that reflect the diversity of users of hormonal contraceptives, expectations for efficacy and safety, and user acceptability of the newer generation products, including cycle control.”

STATE OF THE UNION PROPOSAL FAILS WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE AND COVERAGE NEEDS

Tuesday, January 23: Washington, DC — Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) President Cecile Richards issued the following statement in response to the President's State of the Union address this evening. As the nation's leading advocate and provider of reproductive health services, PPFA is deeply concerned about the president's support for association health plans (AHPs) as a component of health care reform. AHPs could actually reduce health care coverage for the uninsured and underinsured. AHPs are not required to abide by state coverage mandates for important health care measures like contraception, cervical and breast cancer screening and treatment, infertility services, screening for sexually transmitted infections, and other benefits:

"Tonight's speech is proof-positive that the Bush administration continues to put politics above medicine when it comes to the health of women and families. As the nation's leading advocate and provider of reproductive health services, Planned Parenthood has this message for the Bush administration: Women and families need health care solutions. Seventeen million women need access to affordable family planning services. The U.S. has the highest teen pregnancy rate among the most developed countries in the world. We need health care plans that give women and couples access to birth control.

"We urge Bush administration officials to re-think this proposal, reconsider AHPs, and revisit their recent actions related to birth control. They can start by protecting Title X, the nation's family planning program. They should immediately remove anti-birth control hardliner Eric Keroack who is in charge of the program, and replace him with a qualified reproductive health expert who believes in birth control.

"With congressional leadership that supports health care access and recognizes its mandate from the American people, this country has an opportunity finally to make strides toward real solutions. We encourage the Bush administration to join us."

[NOTE: Gov. Blunt called for passage of AHP legislation in the State of the State address the following night]

34TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE RECOGNIZED ACROSS THE STATE

In St. Louis, Columbia, Kirksville, Springfield and Kansas City, women and men gathered to recognize the significant social and health benefits that legal abortion has brought for women and families and to commit to fighting forward. In Kansas City, the “***Trust Women: Looking Back and Moving Forward***” panel brought supporters together to celebrate a new year full of renewed hope for reproductive rights in the heartland. In St. Louis, author Cristina Page ([How the Pro-Choice Movement Saved America](#)) helped participants connect the dots between the attacks on abortion and the anti-abortion movement's attacks on birth control, sex education and non-procreational sexual activity. And, in Columbia, Kirksville, and Springfield, the events featured movies, speakers and a call to action to make sure women and families in Missouri can continue to access reproductive health care.