



Monthly *MONITOR*

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SHOULD WOMEN BE WORSE OFF AFTER HEALTH CARE REFORM?

Planned Parenthood says NO!

There has been a great deal of misinformation being spread about abortion care in health reform efforts. First, the majority of private insurance plans today cover abortion care. Second, a recent Mellman poll revealed that most Americans will NOT support health care reform if it doesn't include comprehensive reproductive health care, including abortion. And, third, Americans do not want to see benefits taken away under health care reform. In other words, women don't want to be worse off under health reform than they are today. For more resources go to www.plannedparenthoodaction.org.

Congress has made progress on health care reform legislation — and all the early drafts would expand coverage, protect women's access to reproductive health care, and allow women to continue to see the health care providers they know and trust (like Planned Parenthood). That's the good news. Now for the bad: Anti-choice groups are gearing up for an all-out assault on women's health care. They're using the reform negotiations to pursue their number one goal: preventing women from accessing comprehensive reproductive health care, from birth control to abortion.

Volunteers and supporters of Planned Parenthood affiliates in Missouri have been working hard all summer to counter the anti-choice assault on health care reform and have provided a bright spot (literally – we've had a bright pink presence at many town hall meetings and rallies). So far **181 volunteers** have logged **533 hours** attending town hall meetings, rallies and lobby visits as well as helping **737 Planned Parenthood supporters call Congress**. Supporters from across the state have also had their voices heard through letters to the editor – see the back page for a sampling.

As a trusted provider of health care to thousands of Missourians, Planned Parenthood affiliates in MO will continue to ensure that women are not made worse off in health care reform. If you want in on the Planned Parenthood pink action, go to www.ppmissouri.org.

JIMMY CARTER LEAVES SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION OVER POOR TREATMENT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Excerpts from [Carter's explanation for his July 2009 decision](#) to leave the convention:

I have been a practicing Christian all my life and a deacon and Bible teacher for many years. My faith is a source of strength and comfort to me, as religious beliefs are to hundreds of millions of people around the world. So my decision to sever my ties with the Southern Baptist Convention, after six decades, was painful and difficult. It was, however, an unavoidable decision when the convention's leaders, quoting a few carefully selected Bible verses and claiming that Eve was created second to Adam and was responsible for original sin, ordained that women must be "subservient" to their husbands and prohibited from serving as deacons, pastors or chaplains in the military service...

This discrimination, unjustifiably attributed to a Higher Authority, has provided a reason or excuse for the deprivation of women's equal rights across the world for centuries...

The truth is that male religious leaders have had - and still have - an option to interpret holy teachings either to exalt or subjugate women. They have, for their own selfish ends, overwhelmingly chosen the latter. Their continuing choice provides the foundation or justification for much of the pervasive persecution and abuse of women throughout the world. This is in clear violation not just of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but also the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, Moses and the prophets, Muhammad, and founders of other great religions - all of whom have called for proper and equitable treatment of all the children of God. It is time we had the courage to challenge these views.

Reproductive care must be part of plan

Editor, the Tribune: Witnessing the myths concerning health care reform being spread has been disheartening and infuriating. False accusations and lies are being repeated and believed by the misinformed. The facts need to be printed and explained to have a rational conversation. When this happens, it will be hard for any person to deny the need for reform.

Reproductive health is basic health care. A bill that excludes reproductive health care coverage means women will be worse off than they are now.

More than 86 percent of employer-based insurance plans now provide coverage for abortion. If this isn't included, millions of women will be at risk of losing coverage they already have.

Women must be allowed to continue to access the health care providers they trust. If a plan cuts out community providers, such as Planned Parenthood, this will be harmful to millions of men, women and families.

Health care reform — which we need and won't kill your grandma — should increase coverage and access for people, not decrease it.

Julia Karll

Published in the *Columbia Tribune* [Monday, August 24, 2009](#)

Women's health care must be protected

[Paula Gianino's op-ed "Health care reform should include women"](#) (July 28) was spot on. However, it seems a bit sad that we have to fight to keep women's reproductive health services in health care reform. We should be embarrassed that the new-infection rate of sexually transmitted infections (including HIV) and maternal mortality rates are higher here than in any other developed nation. Even more shameful, these rates are significantly higher among our poor and minority populations; some are higher than those of some developing countries.

As an African-American woman, I am devastated that anyone would dream of making reproductive health services less accessible to those who need them the most, especially given our current economic situation.

A woman should not fear the cost of treatment if she discovers a lump.

America needs to stand up for our populations that cannot afford the "luxury" of good health, and eliminate our health disparities! We are your sisters, mothers, daughters and granddaughters, and we all need to be better off after health care reform — and that includes our reproductive health.

Brigette Davis — St. Louis

[Published in the St. Louis Post Dispatch 8/1/09](#)

Planned Parenthood offers needed services

Editor, the Tribune: A lot of coverage has been given to how divisive the issue of health care is. Instead of highlighting these differences, I'll stick to the facts:

- In Boone County, there are 78,153 women, most of whom are working-class and whose families rely in part on their income. People assume the only type of services Planned Parenthood provides are abortion-related. However, it provides affordable health care for women, such as myself, who can't afford a private-practice OB-GYN.
- Another assumption is that Planned Parenthood only provides care to women. In fact, it provides a lot of services that benefit children and families.
- While abortion is controversial to some, the facts of what can happen to children of unintended pregnancies are dire. They are more likely to be neglected, abused, undereducated, sick and to eventually lead a life of crime.
- I know from firsthand experience Planned Parenthood never suggests a woman should have an abortion. In fact, during counseling, a woman must wait several days before scheduling those services. I was the one who chose my abortion, along with my partner, and we still believe — several years later — we made the right choice.

Please, as this debate rages, don't take this rage out on women, their children, partners and families. Support full funding for Planned Parenthood. Regardless of what personal and religious beliefs you hold, practice good will and compassion. If health care is going to change, it should make life better for us all, not worse.

Name withheld upon request

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