

Exploration of one of the many health care resources

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Today" shealthcare system is in a constant state of fluctuation and commotion. It is sometimes difficult for the health care consumer to identify a valuable resource when they need one. The purpose of this paper is to explore one of the many health care resources that are available in the greater Philadelphia area and then visit this site to learn more about it.

Philadelphia, in itself is an outstanding resource to the people of the area. In terms of healthcare resource implications this is true. There are numerous teaching hospitals, museums, clinics, and educational centers in this region.

I choose to learn more about Planned Parenthood, a well-known organization in this area as well as nationally. Upon entering the clinic I knew very little about Planned Parenthood. It turned out that what I knew was only a fraction of what Planned Parenthood is really all about. According to the chairperson and president of PP, young people rely on Planned Parenthood to be truthful, confidential and non-judgmental. Women and men are grateful that it is an affordable resource, accessible to all, and respectful of all persons" decisions.

Patients fell safe there because they provide safe medical care by trained professionals. Parents can feel a sense of ease because they know that their children are learning correct and valuable information concerning sex. Both donors and investors can feel confident that their gifts are an investment in the health and well being of the men, women, and children in their community. This paper will relay the information received from the site visit to Planned Parenthood in Media, Pennsylvania. It will discuss the mission, services, and financial aspects of Planned Parenthood.

Mission Statement. The mission of Planned Parenthood Southeastern Pennsylvania (PPSP) is to protect and enhance reproductive freedom, to increase access to reproductive health care services and information, and to promote sexual health. This mission provides the foundation of PPSP's services and programs that they offer to the approximately 43, 000 men, women, and children of the Delaware Valley. Planned Parenthood was founded by a registered nurse named Margaret Sanger in the early 1900's.

Her belief and reason for founding PP was this, "... the first right of a child (is) to be wanted, to be desired, to be planned for with an intensity of love... " (Planned Parenthood, 1999). Sanger was tired of watching women young and old die from complications of pregnancies due to lack of education and health care and was tired of seeing unwanted pregnancies carried to term because women did not know their options. Her goal was to both educate and provide for these women the reproductive services that were necessary for what she called reproductive freedom.

Benefits of Planned Parenthood Planned Parenthood provides numerous programs and services to the people of Southeastern Pennsylvania. I spoke with a woman named Megan (no last name was provided). She informed me of these services and programs, and helped me to gain a better understanding of what PP really is and does. Health Services. Planned Parenthood provides their services to women as well as men- it is a resource to be utilized by all. It is a common misconception that PP is for women only. They offer reproductive health care for men, women, and teens. They supply every FDA approved method of reversible birth control.

These include natural family planning methods, Norplant, Depo-Provera, Birth control Pill, IUD (intrauterine device), condoms, Diaphragm, and cervical caps. Something that they offer is emergency contraception or the "morning after pill." It decreases the likelihood of becoming pregnant even after the conception, because it decreases the healthy nature of the uterine wall. It is only effective within seventy-two hours following conception. They also offer walk-in pregnancy testing, options counseling and referrals to abortion clinics and adoption agencies.

In the Media office, there are three nurse practitioners on staff who provide complete gynecological examinations including Pap tests. There is a physician who is affiliated with their office; he comes in at least twice a month or upon appointment to review all cases. The NP's provide breast health checks and teach breast self-examinations. Mid-life services are provided for menopausal women as well hormone replacement therapy. Testing and treatment of sexually transmitted infections for men and women and confidential and anonymous HIV/AIDS testing are available as well.

Planned Parenthood does perform first trimester abortions. They also offer a number of other health services such as cholesterol and blood pressure screening. Educational services. PPSP offers educational programs to pre-teens, teens, parents, and caregivers on topics of human sexuality, including health care, family planning, relationships, and HIV/Aids. There are teen peer education groups as well as Latino community workshops provided by bilingual/ bicultural educators. PPSP provides a complete resource center

(bookstore and library) which provides a collection of literature on reproduction health care, sexuality, etc.

Advocacy. PPSP urges political action for families/ planning and other reproductive health issues by participating in Lobby Days in Harrisburg and Washington. They are also involved in letter writing campaigns and news alerts to inform and motivate the public to become more involved in reproductive health care issues. Costs. All of the above listed services are available to all who enter the clinic at a small fee. The exception is made in the case of children who are thirteen to seventeen; their services and birth control pills are offered at no charge.

In all other cases the fees for these products and services are quite low; for example, a routine gynecological examination examinations cost about thirty dollars. PP accepts most insurance plans and Medicaid, including Keystone HMO, PA Blue Cross- Blue Shield, and Personal Choice. They accept US Healthcare for surgical procedures only. Funding Revenue. From July 1, 1996 to June 30, 1007, Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania brought in nearly six million dollars (\$5, 915, 000) in revenue.

This included nearly \$2. 5 million from patient health and surgical services, 1. million from government grants and medical assistance. Funding Expenditures. In this same fiscal year, Planned Parenthood" s total expenses (5, 936, 000) were in excess of their revenue by twenty-one thousand dollars. They spent about tree million dollars for patient health services and one million on surgical procedures. Over one quarter of a million was spent

towards public information and advocacy. And over half a million was spent on education and training. Other funds were spent for special events, fund raising, and administration.

At the end of the fiscal report there are ten pages which list the names of those who have made contributions to Planned Parenthood. These donations range from \$25, 000 or more to \$100. PP relies on the contributions of individuals, foundations, and corporations to support their operations and activities in Southeastern PA. All contributions made to PP are tax deductible (Annual Report). I learned a tremendous amount from visiting Planned Parenthood. All of the ideas that I entered the clinic with were quickly proven wrong and limited by the woman that I interviewed.

PP is a valuable resource to all women, men, and teens that are interested in maintaining or improving their reproductive health, reproductive education, or their general health. This is a resource that does not receive the publicity or recognition that it deserves. Hopefully the public is aware of what an asset Planned Parenthood is and how much they offer- more than I did before this project. We in Southeastern Pennsylvania are lucky to have PP to turn to for educational and health care needs.