

# The Advocate

Fall 2018 Newsletter



**Family Planning**  
OF SOUTH CENTRAL NEW YORK, INC.™



# HEALTH

Every day, Family Planning's medical services team is working together to provide our patients with a level of high quality, compassionate care that is unparalleled here in south central New York state.

It's the kind of care that not only has a positive impact on an individual's reproductive health, but their overall health.

"It's about prevention. It's about education. It's about wellness," Lorrie Vail, FNP, the nurse practitioner who serves Family Planning's Norwich health center, said. "It's about empowering people, giving our patients the tools they need to stay healthy."

This patient-centric approach to care requires a vital commodity that's often in short supply these days: time.

"We don't hurry patients in and out. We take our time. We listen to their concerns. We're fully engaged in their care," Vail explained. "And



patients really notice and appreciate that."

Vail added that while Family Planning welcomes all insurance and Medicaid, we also serve people without insurance or means to pay. "And there just aren't a lot of health care providers, who see patients whether or not they can pay," she said.

Building and maintaining that connection with patients is integral to their overall well-being, and not just the quality care they receive at one of Family Planning's five local health

centers. "For many of our patients, we might be the only medical provider they see — at all," Vail explained.

And that means for the thousands of women, men and teens who walk through our doors each year, Family Planning serves as a critical gateway into the region's broader health and human services safety net.

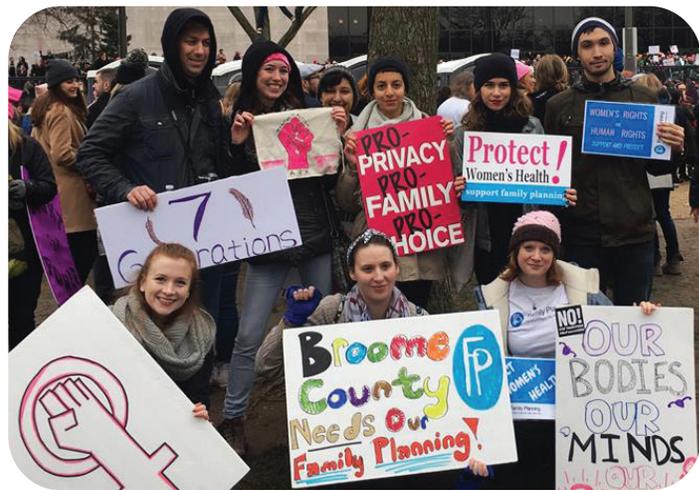
"Our patients count on us to be here for them when they need us most," Vail said. "And that's why we're here, every day, working to make a difference: one healthy person at a time."

# ADVOCACY

November's election has given reproductive health advocates much to be hopeful about. Health care was the number one issue on voter's minds throughout the country. Here in New York State, we at Family Planning have been striving to safeguard women's health care by working for years for the passage of the Reproductive Health Act.

With Donald Trump making good on his promise to appoint anti-choice justices to the Supreme Court, it may be a question of when, not if, Roe v. Wade will be overturned. At that time, the right to have an abortion will be decided by state law. New York State legalized abortion in 1970, leading the nation in protecting women's rights and health. But almost 50 years later, the law needs to be updated to ensure that a woman is able to have an abortion if her health is endangered, and that medical providers are not punished for providing health services.

The Reproductive Health Act would move the regulation of abortion out of the criminal code and into the public health law, where every other health procedure is regulated. Abortion care is health care, not a crime.



The Reproductive Health Act has passed the New York State Assembly every year since 2013, and every year the New York State Senate has refused to bring the bill to the floor for consideration.

With a newly constituted State Senate comes a critical opportunity for the law's passage—and Family Planning will be there, serving as steadfast advocates for reproductive rights and rural health care in Broome, Chenango, Delaware and Otsego counties.

# MEDICAL SERVICES

- Annual exams for women & men
- Birth control, with all FDA approved methods
- Free condoms
- Emergency contraception for only \$15
- Pregnancy testing with full options counseling — including information about adoption, abortion & parenting
- Screening for breast & cervical cancers
- Pap tests with follow-up care
- Advanced diagnostic screening, treatment for precancerous cervical conditions
- Testing & treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- Rapid HIV testing & counseling
- HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Rapid Hepatitis C testing & counseling
- Gardasil, the HPV vaccine that prevents cervical and other cancers
- Walk-ins always welcome
- Certified medical translation services
- Age appropriate, comprehensive, medically accurate sexuality education



## EXCELLENCE

It's no secret that our Director of Health Center Operations Melissa Brennan, FNP, is recognized as one of the region's top health care professionals. Most recently, Brennan was chosen as National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association's "Family Planning Champion" for October.

"Thank you, Melissa, for your decades of work and tireless commitment to family planning," NFPCHA wrote in its official announcement celebrating Brennan's professional excellence.

As part of its recognition roll out, the association asked her to share a short quote to highlight the importance of reproductive health care. Brennan, as usual, put together the perfect words.

"Family planning doesn't just serve as the vital foundation for health and wellness. It's also plays a critical role in allowing people to choose their own path in life, set and achieve future goals — realizing their full potential."



## EDUCATION

Family Planning's education department plays a vital role in advancing the reproductive health and wellness of south central New York.

Every day, our educators are out in the communities we serve, sharing medically accurate, age appropriate education about sexuality and sexual health — guided by more than 20 different evidence based programs we offer public schools, human services agencies, churches, county jails and other local organizations.

Our educators conduct outreach at local health fairs, community and school events, WIC sites, job fairs and college events. And department members frequently lead private one-on-one in-home education sessions with families and individuals, as well.

Marilyn Hess, Family Planning's Community Educator for Chenango County, said working collaboratively with medical center staff to create and provide educational opportunities directly to patients visiting one of our five local health centers also has a significant impact on fulfilling the agency's day-to-day mission.

"Providing patients with medically accurate information — and replacing incorrect or unreliable information they picked up somewhere else, or something they were confused about, or that they weren't even aware of to begin with — is just so important," Hess said. "Patients often say to me, 'You know what? I didn't even know I needed that information. Thank you.'"

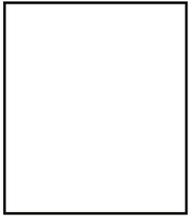
She added that these talks also serve as another key opportunity for Family Planning staff to bridge the gap between a patient at risk or in need, and the region's wider health and social services safety net.

"It's about setting up that line of communication and trust that then allows us refer to patients to other community resources — right then and there," Hess explained. "It's about helping people make meaningful connections that make a difference in their lives. And it's what we do here, across our region, every day."

FOLLOW US:



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# Family Planning

OF SOUTH CENTRAL NEW YORK, INC. <sup>TM</sup>

2018 NEWSLETTER

**Our mission is to advocate and provide individuals, families and organizations in our region with information, education and health care services pertaining to human sexuality and reproductive health in a private and confidential manner, respectful of all beliefs, supporting individual freedom of choice and responsibility.**



*"Just want to express my gratitude to the entire staff for being so kind and welcoming. I've been there 3 times this past year and every experience has been positive. Thank you for all that you do!!!"*

*"I'm grateful for your existence and the help over the years, when I was broke, alone and frightened."*

*"This was one of the best experiences I've had with a new doctor and I was so happy when I left."*

*"Wonderful, friendly, knowledgeable, non-judgemental."*

**The selection of comments below were voluntarily shared by patients through our anonymous online survey:**



**FAMILY PLANNING  
LOCATIONS**

**WHAT OUR PATIENTS TELL US!**