

Michigan Religious Coalition For Reproductive Choice

MI-RCRC

Winter 2007

How Sweet It Is!!

The sweet taste of victory for proponents of reproductive health last November included results in three states where issues around abortion were on the ballot. Most significantly, in South Dakota voters rejected a law that would have banned nearly all abortions in the state, including in those instances of pregnancy which were the result of rape and incest and those in which there is risk to the health of the mother. The legislature and governor of South Dakota had intended the law to be a direct challenge to the Supreme Court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade*. However, even in this conservative state, citizens objected to such a strict and rigid limit on abortion by defeating the ban 56% to 44%.

In California and Oregon, voters rejected ballot initiatives that would have mandated parental notification requirements for teens seeking to terminate a pregnancy, including those who have experienced violence or are victims of incest and have good reason to fear parental notification. Thirty-five states currently have provisions requiring parental notification or consent.

Sweeter...

Perhaps even "sweeter" news to us in mid-Michigan is what has recently been accomplished by Planned Parenthood Mid-Michigan Alliance. On December 6th, clinics throughout the area sponsored Free Emergency Contraception (EC) Day. Nearly 850 individuals (not all women—men can pick it up, too) chose to visit one of the health centers and receive a free dose of EC. Also called "the morning after pill"

or "Plan B", EC is very safe, containing the same hormones found in regular oral contraception. Having EC in the medicine cabinet gives women an extra chance to prevent pregnancy in case the condom breaks, birth control pills are missed, unprotected sex occurs, or when forced sex happens.

EC finally received over-the-counter status for individuals over age 18 from the Food and Drug Administration in late August and is now available at pharmacies without a prescription. But some determination is necessary! It costs about \$45 and isn't apt to be on the shelf next to condoms or pregnancy tests (where some of us believe it belongs)! Would-be-purchasers must be willing to approach the pharmacy counter to request it and be prepared to show ID to confirm their age.

Fortunately, there is no upper age limit. This means that moms, grandmas, aunts, and anyone whose home is frequented by young folks would do well to keep a dose on hand. One never knows when someone might confide in them, either on behalf of themselves, or, of course, there's always "...not for me Grandma, but for a good friend of mine."

Sweetest of all...

The birth-control pill is now available--in spearmint! On December 7th, the pharmaceutical company Warner Chilcott announced the availability of a tablet called Femcon(TM)Fe, the first birth control pill that offers women the option of chewing their daily tablet. It is designed to provide a convenient option for women "on-the-go".

Research has shown that compliance impacts oral contraceptive failure rates, ... "and anything we can do to make it easier for our patients to maintain a daily regimen is a notable advancement" ... according to Laurent Delli-Bovi, MD, Medical Director, Women's Health

Services at Chestnut Hill Family Planning Facility in Boston.

When taken correctly, oral contraceptives have a failure rate of less than one percent per year. However, studies show that 47% of women miss one or more pills per month, and missing pills can increase the risk of pregnancy. According to Roger Boissonneault, Chief Executive Officer of Warner Chilcott, women who rely on oral contraceptives tend to lead busy lives and "...we wanted to offer women a convenient, easy-to-use option for those on-the-go with the same reliability as the traditional swallowed pill."

Warner Chilcott is a specialty pharmaceutical company focused on developing, manufacturing and marketing and selling branded prescription products in women's healthcare. For more information, log on to:

<http://www.wcrx.com>.

News from Our Ann Arbor Unit

We're very pleased to announce that Duane Dowell of our AA unit has agreed to serve our Michigan affiliate as co-chair along with Rev. Bob Frederick. Duane has been a long-time activist for women's reproductive health and related issues. Among the upcoming events in the Ann Arbor area in which he is involved are:

Sunday, January 14th at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Ann Arbor he is among the panelists on the forum "Sexuality Education: Issues for the 21st Century." He will share the spot-light with John Keserich of Planned Parenthood.

Also in Ann Arbor will be a student event "Disco for Choice" on January 21st. Sounds a bit noisy, doesn't it! Accolades to this group for reaching out to the younger set in creative ways!!

For more information about either event, contact Duane at dldowell@aap.net.

On November 11th, the U. of M. Medical Students for Choice hosted the Midwest Regional Conference. An enthusiastic group attended and were inspired by presentations on topics which included: Facts and Myths Surrounding Abortion; Political and Legal Issues in Reproductive Health; Elective Abortions and Genetic Testing; and Choosing to Become an Abortion Provider. Among the presenters who spoke to a packed room was our very own Rev.

Bob Frederick. The students were eager to hear how individuals of "faith" can be pro-choice.

In East Lansing...

MSU Students for Choice invite you to a Student Activist Training (not JUST for students)! If you believe all people should have access to safe, comprehensive health care, learn how to advocate to help make it a reality, on Saturday, January 20, 10-6pm in the MSU Student Union. To register, or for more information, please contact Dessa at: Dessa.Cosma@ppfa.org.

Students for Choice are also coordinating the art exhibit which will be shown during the Roe V. Wade celebration on January 21st (details inside page). For more information, and especially if you are interested in exhibiting a piece, please contact Joy at: Joy.Whitten@ppmchoice.com

The Michigan Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice works to ensure reproductive choice through the moral power of religious communities. The Coalition seeks to be a representative of people of all faiths and beliefs and to give a clear voice to the reproductive issues of people of color, those living in poverty, youth, and underserved populations.

Thank You!

A sincere thank you to all who responded promptly and generously to our appeal in mid-November for the financial support necessary to continue our efforts on behalf of reproductive justice.

For all whose contribution reached us by early December, we have updated the digits next to your name on your mailing label. A designation of "06" means that your contribution reached us in time for our data-base to reflect that. For contributions received later than that, we will so note by our next mailing.

And never fear if you didn't get a chance to contribute at this time. There will be opportunities in 07. As you read of the

work being done on campuses both in Ann Arbor and East Lansing, be aware that many of the expenses incurred by the student groups are among those underwritten by us. That means by YOU.

As always, comments and suggestions re: this newsletter and/or other matters are welcome. Please contact co-chairs:

Rev. Bob Frederick at [REDACTED]
or
Duane Dowell at mircrc@mircrc.org