

Concerned Clergy for CHOICE



A PROJECT OF THE EDUCATION FUND OF FAMILY PLANNING ADVOCATES

JOIN US FOR AN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE CALL WITH ACTIVIST PAM CHAMBERLAIN: WHAT'S NEXT FROM THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT?

New faces, new tactics and our response

Securing reproductive justice requires an understanding of a constantly changing atmosphere. An educational conference call, "What's Next for the Religious Right? New Faces, New Tactics and Our Response," led by Pam Chamberlain on Wednesday, January 9, 2008 at 11:00 am will explore how to stay ahead in a shifting national and international environment.



Pam Chamberlain

Pam Chamberlain studies and writes about opposition to the reproductive justice and LGBTQ rights movements for Political Research Associates (PRA) in Boston. She has worked with PRA since 1999, as an editor for the Activist Resource Kits, the lead researcher on their Campus Activism Project, and regular contributor to the *Public Eye* magazine. Pam has been involved with feminist, peace, and human rights activism since her days as a high school teacher. She maintains a commitment to making research from various academic fields accessible to activists. The call will be moderated by The Rev. Melanie Miller, a Clergy Advisory Board member.

To sign up for this call, please contact Concerned Clergy for Choice at info@edfundfpa.org. There is no charge to participate. Call-in and join the leading edge for reproductive justice.

ON-CAMERA MEDIA TRAINING FOR CLERGY

Anticipate the tough questions.

Get comfortable making your point.

Take control of your interview.

Based on the highly successful media trainings for national advocates, Planned Parenthood of New York City (PPNYC) and Concerned Clergy for Choice Advocates will offer "On Camera Media Training for Clergy," Wednesday, February 27, in Manhattan from 9:30 am to noon. The session will cover do's and don'ts of deciding whether to accept an interview, crafting talking points and holding one's ground with the media. Clergy will participate in individual on-camera interviews and receive immediate feedback and support. To learn more and register, please contact choicevoice@ppnyc.org or Rabbi Ross at info@edfundfpa.org. There is no charge to participate.

INSIDE: FEATURE ON "TO SAVE A LIFE: HPV AND VACCINATION AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER"

FUNDED BY THE ROBERT STERLING CLARK FOUNDATION

TO SAVE A LIFE: HPV AND VACCINATION AGAINST CERVICAL CANCER

FROM THE DIRECTOR: IF IT PREVENTS CANCER...

Parents will come to us, as clergy, for advice about HPV vaccination for their daughters. As a response, the thought that leaps out is, "It can save a life."

The Jewish text, the Mishnah, teaches that "to save a life is to save a universe," ancient wisdom that comes to mind with the introduction of Gardasil, a vaccine that prevents virus infections that could lead to cancer. As I was listening to a radio show, a guest criticized the vaccine, citing the kind of flawed arguments we have so often come to expect. Another guest, a medical doctor, came down like a hammer. "It prevents cancer! What could be bad about it?" And ultimately, that's the point. Gardasil is the first vaccine proven highly effective in preventing cancer. If a treatment enables a woman to avoid a life-threatening medical condition, then what could be wrong with it? It can save a life.

Each year, more than 4,000 women in the United States die from cervical cancer and 290,000 women die worldwide from this disease. Especially in communities and countries where access to regular Pap screenings is lacking, access to vaccination is a tremendous public good.

HPV affects more than 50 percent of sexually active adults. Though most HPV infections seem to go away by themselves, among those infections that endure, the risk of cervical cancer is a real threat, caused by a virus that has been around as long as human beings.

Vaccination means saving lives. It means keeping women healthy. It leaves a woman with one less worry in the event of sexual assault. And it offers a measure of protection in a world where many sexually active people have been exposed to – and can spread – a potentially deadly virus.

Gardasil can save a life; it can save many lives. The doctor says it prevents cancer. The Food and Drug Administration says it is safe. My faith tradition teaches that saving a life is like saving a universe. What could be bad?

Rabbi Dennis S. Ross



WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED!

The Infectious Diseases Society of America supports "use of the HPV vaccine, given the potential to protect women and girls from infections that can lead to life-threatening disease."

Infectious Diseases Society of America, "Statement on Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccine," 2007

"Clinical trials have shown the vaccine to be highly immunogenic (immunity producing), safe and well tolerated in females 9 to 26 years of age... Girls 11 to 12 should be immunized routinely..."

American Academy of Pediatrics, "Prevention of Human Papillomavirus Infection: Provisional Recommendations for Immunization of Females with Quadrivalent Human Papillomavirus Vaccine," May 23, 2007

"The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology recommends the vaccination of females in this age group."

American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, "HPV Vaccine – ACOG Recommendations," 2006

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is HPV and how does it relate to cervical cancer?

HPV is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), a group of more than 100 different viruses. Most HPV infections show no symptoms and clear up on their own; others cause warts or cancer, including cervical cancer.

What should we know about cervical cancer in the USA?

The American Cancer Society estimates that more than 10,000 women develop cervical cancer and more than a third of that number dies annually. Most women with invasive cervical cancer have not had regular cervical cancer screenings.

What is Gardasil and how can it prevent cervical cancer in women?

Gardasil, an HPV vaccine, protects against infection from four HPV types, including two types that cause about 70% of cervical cancers. In clinical trials among women who had not yet been infected with a specific HPV type, the efficacy of the vaccine was close to 100% for prevention of pre-cancer lesions of the cervix due to that type. If women are vaccinated before their first sexual experience, Gardasil should be very effective in preventing those specific HPV types.

Does the HPV vaccine make Pap testing unnecessary?

No! Vaccinated women should have regular Pap tests. Approximately 30% of cervical cancers are caused by types not covered by the vaccine, so vaccinated women would still be at risk for some cancers. Women may not get the full benefit of vaccination if they receive it after they have already acquired one or more of the four HPV types covered by the vaccine.

A CLERGY PERSPECTIVE:



The Rev. Kaaren Anderson

Can I take a little liberty with an old saying?

"An ounce of prevention can be worth more than a pound of cure."

There is now available a vaccine – a measure of prevention – that would avoid the need for seeking treatment for a life-threatening medical condition. Yes, a regular Pap test, the screening exam for abnormalities of the cervix, is a very effective way of detecting certain infections, unusual cell growth and cancer. While these medical problems, including cervical cancer, can be treated, prevention is so much the better. After all, not every woman has access to a health care provider for a necessary screening. And even for those who can get to the doctor and cover the cost, when a Pap test detects something may be wrong, additional medical attention, with the associated financial costs, time and worry, add a burden. In a world where we cannot guarantee that every person who needs a doctor will be able to see one, it is better to protect a woman beforehand rather than wait until there is a health question or problem. This is especially true when it comes to HPV, a pervasive virus that so many people carry.

Thousands of women are diagnosed with cervical cancer each year in the United States. While the current vaccination will not prevent all forms of cervical cancer – a regular Pap test is a necessity even with a vaccination – we can save lives, and spare many a woman a burden. Because we and our daughters cannot always rely on access to that "pound of cure," we can opt for "prevention" to strike at the problem in advance.

I hope that one day, we can do more to provide better treatments for illness. Until then, let's take important steps to prevent illness, in advance.

The Rev. Kaaren Anderson, Rochester, NY

NEW E-MAIL RESOURCE “FAITH AND CHOICE: FOCUS ON THE NEWS”

Do you want to keep up with the issues but find yourself pressed for time and feeling uninformed? Take advantage of a new e-mail resource, “Faith and Choice: Focus on the News,” a behind-the-headlines digest culled from the national and international media resources of FPA and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. To sign up for this twice monthly e-mail selection of critical information, please contact Concerned Clergy for Choice at info@edfundfpa.org. There is no charge to participate.

Resolve to join Concerned Clergy for Choice in Albany in the New Year

- **FPA’S 31ST ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**
MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2008
- **ON-CAMERA
MEDIA TRAINING**
MONDAY, MAY 5, 2008
- **CLERGY DAY**
TUESDAY, MAY 6, 2008

SPIRITUAL DIMENSIONS OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH DECISIONS

A PASTORAL CARE RESOURCE

Clergy, while well trained and skilled in one-to-one conversation about many difficult medical situations, often lack the background and experience to enter discussion about reproductive health. *Spiritual Dimensions of Reproductive Health Decisions*, a site-tested workshop for clergy of all denominations, seeks to establish a more open dialogue with women on this challenging topic. The session addresses legal, demographic, social and spiritual dimensions of reproductive health decisions, without trying to impose or refute any particular faith teaching. It covers chaplaincy codes of conduct, faith statements about abortion, adoption, minor’s rights and parental involvement, and emotional and spiritual reactions to abortion.

To request a copy of this curriculum or to arrange for a presentation, please e-mail Concerned Clergy for Choice at info@edfundfpa.org or call 518-436-8408.

NEW CONCERNED CLERGY FOR CHOICE WEBSITE

Newsletters, resources on pastoral care and stem cell research, and denominational perspectives on women’s health, reproductive justice, comprehensive sex education, marriage equality and more are available through the new Concerned Clergy for Choice web pages at www.edfundfpa.org/clergy/. Visit us now and while you are there, tour the recently redesigned FPA web pages. Keep informed and get involved!

CLERGY ADVISORY BOARD

The Clergy Advisory Board, a group of pro-choice clergy spanning an array of faiths and regions of New York State, advises the Concerned Clergy for Choice project.

Members include:

The Rev. Kaaren Anderson
Unitarian Universalist Rochester

The Rev. James R. Bridges
*Unitarian Universalist
Congregation at Rock Tavern*

The Rev. Tom Davis
*United Church of Christ
Saratoga Springs*

The Rev. Dr. Paula Gravelle
Lutheran, Schenectady

Rabbi Marc Gruber
*Central Synagogue
Rockville Centre*

The Rev. Tomi Jacobs
*Christ and Emmanuel Lutheran
Churches in Ghent and
Chatham*

Rabbi Alison Kobey
*B’rith Kodesh
Rochester, NY*

The Rev. Joel Miller
*Unitarian Universalist Church
Buffalo*

The Rev. Melanie Miller
*United Church of Christ
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The Rev. Larry Phillips
*Emmanuel Baptist- Friedens
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The Rev. Finley Schaeff
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Rabbi Shoshanah
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