



Tennessee and North Mississippi

Knoxville Now



Our Challenges Now

THE HEALTH CHALLENGES ARE DAUNTING

In Knox County and East Tennessee, rates of all major sexually transmitted infections (STIs) have risen every year since 2014. Rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in Knox County are the highest of any county in East Tennessee and exceed both state and national rates. Left untreated, chlamydia can lead to pelvic inflammatory disease, hospitalization, and infertility. Knox County also has the second highest rate of syphilis infection in East Tennessee.

It's not just STIs. Teen pregnancies and births in Tennessee vastly exceed national rates. Knox County also shows enormous racial disparity in teen births—the birth rates for Hispanic teens and Black teens are more than double that of White teens. Unfortunately, financial resources remain correlated with sexual and reproductive health outcomes, and nearly 42% of Knoxville's Black women and 35% of Hispanic women live below the poverty level.

While one third of all LGBTQ Americans live in the South, the region's social, economic, and political conditions place LGBTQ southerners at greater risk of poverty and health disparities. East Tennessee, in particular, has very few places where LGBTQ people, and particularly trans folks, can turn for nonjudgmental services.

Knoxville and the surrounding regions—many of which are rural and medically underserved areas—have a immediate need for affordable, accessible sexual and reproductive health care.



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Why Now

THE STATE OF SEX EDUCATION IS APPALLING

The poor quality and overall lack of education about sexual issues is causing preventable health problems, creating stress and trauma, and putting our teens' futures at risk.

Many schools in our region do not offer sex education at all. When schools do offer classes, students report shame-based, stigma-filled content that targets women and LGBTQ students, resulting in unsafe and even hostile environments. Pervasive ignorance, fear of sexuality in our community, a hostile political climate, and conflicting views on reproductive and sexual rights and fact-based sexual health education, all result in a dearth of sexual health knowledge among those who need it most.

OUR REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE HANGING BY A THREAD

Abortion is one of the safest procedures in contemporary medicine, and this has been true for decades. Yet oppressive abortion regulations are being enacted in Tennessee under the pretense that they make abortion safer. In fact, they have the opposite effect.

Our opponents' real goal is to make safe, legal abortion inaccessible and thus drive people into the back alley once again. Abortion regulations in our region are unethical: they increase risks to patients, limit treatment choices, and make adequate care dependent on where you live and how much money you have.

We know that anti-abortion politicians are just getting started. The same people who want to coerce people to carry pregnancies also place unreasonable restrictions on sex education, demonize and bully the LGBTQ community, and attack policies that provide access to contraception.



**PPTNM wants to make change
NOW. But we need your help.
That is why we're launching
the Knoxville Now Campaign.**

Knoxville **Now**

**CAMPAIGN GOAL:
\$900,000**

The expansion project will include a complete renovation of PPTNM's current 3,800 sq. ft. building. This will allow us to provide surgical abortion services in addition the medication abortion services we currently offer, and it will add 2,250 square feet of space dedicated to community education and reproductive rights advocacy.

**We've raised \$750,000
and NOW we need you,
the Knoxville community,
to help us raise the remaining
\$150,000.**



The Knoxville Now Campaign will achieve these goals:

Change lives through
expanded and enhanced
patient services.

Ensure access to
reproductive health
services.

Foster sexual health and
well-being by providing
honest and accurate
information through
education and outreach.



The expansion and renovation of our Knoxville Health Center will allow us to provide surgical abortion services for East Tennesseans in a state-of-the-art medical setting.

Ensure access to reproductive health services.



Amanda

Planned Parenthood has marked almost every milestone of my reproductive health. I simply would not recognize my life without the difference PP has made in it, and I can't say for sure I'd even still be here if it weren't for them.

As a young woman in need of affordable birth control, I made my first appointment at a PP clinic following the advice of a friend - "They don't just do abortions, you know." I didn't! I was a relatively healthy young person with no insurance, and after that, Planned Parenthood became my primary health care provider for nearly two decades. Annual well person and breast exams, Pap tests - all were provided at a cost I could manage in a setting that felt safe and non-judgmental.

When I had several irregular Pap results, I was able to obtain a colposcopy at an only-slightly-farther-away PP clinic. When I needed a different method of birth control, when I needed STI testing, when I needed an abortion - as life dealt its best and worst blows, Planned Parenthood saw me through it all. In my thirties, with a career and finally some 'good' health insurance, I'd find myself missing the sanctuary of the open-minded staff and culture of my Planned Parenthood. And now, as I attempt to co-parent a teenager, I am grateful for the amazing resources they offer for reproductive health, sexuality, and healthy relationships.

Likewise, if I had not had access to abortion care all those years ago, I would have struggled with infinitely more hurdles on my way to becoming the person I love being today. My life would be unrecognizable. This teenager wouldn't know me. My abortion gave me my life.

The biggest debt of gratitude I owe, however, is for those times Planned Parenthood helped save my life. In 2017, I was 41 years old and experiencing highly irregular menstruation. Rather than seek the care of my OB/GYN, I opted to put my dollars to use at Planned Parenthood. Blood work and labs from the Knoxville clinic showed I was menopausal, which set in motion a series of events that led to the diagnosis of my breast cancer. If not for Planned Parenthood's accessible care and counsel, I have to wonder how long it might have been before I discovered my cancer and whether I would have had enough time to fight it. I continue to give my time and energy to my local Planned Parenthood because I want every young person to have the opportunities I did. So should you.



Foster sexual health and well-being by providing honest and accurate information through education and outreach.

Anna

In high school, I was a part of Planned Parenthood's FYI Peer Education Program. FYI is a way for a small group of students from local high schools to get educated about issues of safe sex, sexuality, gender, healthy relationships, and in turn take that information back to their peers and correct any misinformation they hear around these issues. I was very lucky in that my parents taught me quite a bit in the realm of sex ed. So I was not solely reliant on the city sponsored sex ed. But many of my peers were not so lucky. While I don't remember any part of my school's sex ed directly being misinformation, it was very limited in its scope, and many things were left out or brushed over.

Planned Parenthood gave me the tools and the information to help educate my peers about safe sex and healthy sexuality. The light they switched on for me in turn lit up the conversations a lot of other kids got to have amongst themselves, a domino effect that showed me what's possible when education creates lasting change from the ground up. I also ended up having these important conversations with those who were not my peers, who were older, who held positions of power. Planned Parenthood empowered me to engage in those conversations.

While the education they provided was crucial, PP also helped me discover an interest in activism and organizing. Planned Parenthood not only provides exceptional health care (which I have utilized as well), but they also do necessary work within

the community, advocating for equal rights and equal treatment as well as doing important lobbying in Nashville. We were responsible for planning and organizing our own events, so we learned how to engage with the community. Planned Parenthood allowed me to experience this advocacy in a safe way, surrounded by other young people desperate for change.

// Planned Parenthood taught me a lot about the world and about myself, and I am sure they have done similar things for others. I hope in the future it can continue this vital work and provide for others all the invaluable things it provided for me. //



Kirby

My name is Kirby, and I am entering my third year as an FYI Peer Educator for Planned Parenthood. My own sex education growing up was lackluster at best. When I joined FYI, all I knew was I didn't know much and needed to know a lot more. The information I received at the FYI sessions was a revelation - accurate, inclusive, and nonjudgmental. But it's the space Planned Parenthood creates to have these conversations that makes the education so powerful. The lack of bias, the absence of judgment, objective and intimate, encouraging of questions. In other words, a safe space. I walked away from those sessions with information that helped keep myself and others safe and healthy. And more urgently, I learned that the human body, in every make and model, is human and nothing to be ashamed of.

The education expands beyond learning itself. Peer Educators serve as both students and teachers. As we learn, we are taught to teach. The ability to relay information that is intensely wanted by friends and peers who deserve it...is as much an honor as it is a necessity. Furthermore, being a teacher is a kind of education on its own. Having your knowledge tested by new questions, or familiar questions with new angles, allows both parties to grow in new ways.

People have all kinds of things going on around their sexuality. Sometimes those you encounter are not those you were prepared to teach. And as a Peer Educator, I learned very quickly that it is vital to meet people where they are. FYI teaches its students to be trustworthy. We are taught to give the facts and to respect that people need to be understood.

Knowledge is power. But it is nothing without empathy, patience, and a capacity for listening. With the incredible results in my life, I know we have an obligation to expand FYI's reach and pay it forward. The qualities I have had a chance to develop with FYI touch every other area of my life, the person I get to be for myself and others. It's the same for so many of my fellow educators.



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Vision

Every person enjoys full equality and dignity, the right to sexual health and autonomy, access to the best quality sexual health care available, and the ability to make informed decisions without coercion or discrimination.

Mission

To improve health and well-being by providing high-quality, nonjudgmental sexual health care, honest and accurate sexuality education, and reproductive health and rights advocacy.

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