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News from Mabel (Fall 2003)

Mabel Wadworth Health Center Staff

Mabel Wadworth Health Center

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Colposcopy Clinics A Phenomenal Success

You know that Pap smear tests should be performed on a regular basis. But, why? Pap smears can detect pathological abnormalities.

If a Pap test reveals an abnormality, a woman needs a colposcopy. During this 20 – 30 minute procedure, a clinician examines the cervix with a microscope-like instrument called a colposcope, which shines light upon the cervix and magnifies the view. This relatively simple procedure saves lives because it can detect early stage cancer.



Nurse Practitioner Terry Marley-DeRosier (left) and Registered Nurse Kathy Cousins (right) handle the colposcope in an exam room.

So if a woman's Pap smear were abnormal, it would seem logical to schedule a colposcopy. In Eastern and Northern Maine, the problem is that uninsured or under-insured women or those with Medicaid coverage have extremely limited access to this potentially life-saving procedure.

In 2001, the Mabel Wadsworth Center's Nurse Practitioner participated in a nationally recognized colposcopy training program.

Under the supervision of local obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Kimberly Kauffman, who volunteered her time, the Center's Nurse Practitioner began performing colposcopies during monthly clinics.

The demand for this newly available service was shockingly high. Currently, the Center sees 12 – 14 women every month for colposcopies. According to Nurse Practitioner Terry Marley-DeRosier, "By offering this service to our clients, we provide women with the opportunity to be seen in a more timely manner and in a familiar setting, which ultimately reduces their anxiety."

Many of the Center's clients are young women who are at high risk for the Human Papilloma Virus, which is a major factor in abnormal Pap smears and cervical cancer. During the first six months of our colposcopy clinics, thirty-five percent of participants were in fact age 20 or younger.

Did you know ...

- we accept all major insurances?
- we welcome Medicare and Medicaid?
- we set up convenient and individualized payment schedules?

Health Services

- Abortion care
- Adoption referrals
- Annual exams
- Breast exams
- Colposcopy
- Contraception
- Lesbian health care
- Menopause consultation
- Pap smears
- Pregnancy testing and options education
- Prenatal care
- Postnatal care
- STD testing and treatment

Professional Training

- Abortion care
- Contraception
- Lesbian health
- Menopause
- PMS
- Prenatal care
- Sexuality
- STD education

Political Advocacy

- Abortion rights
- Lesbian and gay rights
- Women's sexual and reproductive health care

"I like the Center's combination of knowledgeable staff, as well as the respect they show me as an active participant in my own health care."
 – client

Darylen Cote Earns Achievement Award

For more than 25 years, Darylen Cote has been traveling across Aroostook County teaching reproductive and sexual health classes.

In 1975, Darylen started working in Aroostook County Action Program's (ACAP) Family Planning and Adolescent Health Program. She taught young people about human sexuality and reproductive health, as well as counseled the Family Planning Clinic's clients.

In 1980, Darylen was promoted to the Coordinator of Education and Training with ACAP's Health First Program. Assigned the daunting task of managing the county-wide program, Darylen met the challenge. She worked with family planning educators, staff members, and volunteers on emerging health issues. She was instrumental in the design and implementation of many programs, including:

- HIV Prevention
- Gender Equity Education
- High-Risk Youth Outreach
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Darylen Cote, with her husband, Hap, just received the 2003 Mabel Sine Wadsworth Women's Health Achievement Award.



In an effort to reach the entire community, Darylen produced two radio shows about sexuality. A licensed social worker, certified principal, and educational curriculum coordinator, Darylen worked with the public school systems to educate adolescents. She also held corresponding seminars and workshops for the teens' parents.

When she retired in 2002 from ACAP, Darylen began working for the Family Planning Association of Maine as a Family Life Education Consultant. She now spends at least one week each month in the Augusta area – a 250 mile commute from her home in Caribou – consulting with local schools on how to incorporate family life and sexuality education.

In her spare time, Darylen is a regular columnist for PTO Today Magazine, a national publication. Her column, "In the Lead," covers leadership issues for parent-teacher organizations.

On May 29, 2003, Darylen's accomplishments were recognized at the annual dinner of the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center. Executive Director Ruth L. Lockhart presented Darylen with the Mabel Sine Wadsworth Women's Health Achievement Award. Now, Darylen's great contributions to women's health issues are recognized alongside those of leaders including Mary Herman, Sharon Barker, and Parker Harris, MD.

Recognize the Remarkable

The Center accepts nominations for the Mabel Sine Wadsworth Women's Health Achievement Award on a year-round basis. Nominees should demonstrate commitment to:

- educating people about self-determination and reproductive freedom,
- creating access to quality health care for low-income women,
- working to provide full health care rights for lesbian women, and
- fostering connections among diverse groups regarding women's health care issues

If you know someone who has made a significant contribution – either on a volunteer or paid basis – please contact the Center at 947-5337 to request a nomination form.

A Little Confused?

We were delighted to widely distribute our newsletter in the spring. The Center's Board of Directors hopes that you received your newsletter and enjoyed learning more about the extraordinary health care services that the Center's staff members provide to women across the state.

Did you notice that we called you by the wrong first name? Were you surprised to have a Doreen, Janet, or Mark that resides with you and even shares your last name?

A small computer error caused first names in our mailing list to be mis-sorted. We sincerely apologize for any confusion the incorrect first names may have caused. By George (is that your real name?), we'll get it right this time around.

Our Youngest Volunteer

Libby Mooers is only 18-years-old, but she has already contributed so much. She spent her junior year in Washington, DC as a congressional page. Her days began at 7:00 a.m. with classes at the Library of Congress. As soon as the United States House of Representatives went into session, she and her peers could be seen on CNN working right down on the floor. Libby's first-hand experience in our nation's capital piqued her interest in political and social issues.

Upon returning to Bangor, Libby frequently spotted protesters in front of the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center. Having just experienced the anthrax crisis in Washington, and sympathizing with those on the receiving end of scare tactics, Libby said, "I wanted to do something to help the Center. As a senior in high school and saving money for college, I was far from flush and could not afford to make a major financial contribution. So, I contacted the Center and asked if they might be able to use a new volunteer."

Could we ever! Staff members pounced on Libby's generous offer, and she started volunteering at the Center every Thursday after the school bell rang. Libby performed secretarial tasks and clipped newspapers for articles about women's health. She was also instrumental in producing two annual appeal mailings.

The Center was fortunate to have such a high-energy and dedicated volunteer. Although we are going to miss her, our loss is Columbia University's gain. Libby leaves in the fall to study International Relations and – who would have guessed – Women's Studies.

Thanks for all of your help, Libby!



Libby Mooers (right) receives recognition for her volunteer work.

How One Person Makes a Difference

To provide a wide-range of gynecological and obstetrical services – especially to low-income women – the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center depends upon the generosity of individuals. In fact, our friends, families, and neighbors contribute 25% of the Center's annual budget.

We asked one of our longtime donors why she considered supporting the Center a top priority.

Suzanne Serezze:

Ten years ago, I heard about the serious problems that pro-life picketers were causing at the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center. I watched the news clips of picketers harassing young women. It incensed me – just the idea that they were trying to control women's bodies through intimidation.

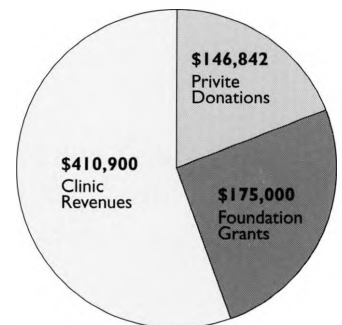
Shortly thereafter, I heard about the Center's Pledge-A-Picket program. People could sign up to make a contribution every time someone picketed the Center. Instead of negatively affecting a woman's right to choose, those picketers instead became catalysts for support of the Center. It was ingenious. I signed up immediately.

I find other ways to support the Center, too. I celebrate my wedding anniversary and family birthdays by making gifts to the Center. When my daughter graduated from college, I made a contribution in her honor. I like to commemorate milestones by supporting the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center.

Since I cannot afford to make really large gifts, I am very careful about the organizations that I support. By making a gift to a small nonprofit organization right here in Maine, I am not paying for a lot of infrastructure or administrative overhead. My \$100 goes a long way at the Center.

The Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center provides such remarkable services to this community. Women who would otherwise be overlooked are included by the Center – lesbians, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

I want all the women in our region to be healthy. By making contributions to the Center as often as possible, I get to be a part of the solution ... and that's a great feeling.



Partial Birth Abortion Ban: A Major Step in Overturning Roe v. Wade

What is so-called “partial birth” abortion? No one really knows.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed a ban on all “partial birth” abortions. Yet, there is no medical procedure known as a “partial birth” abortion. It is a misleading, ambiguous, non-medical term used in this bill that institutes a sweeping ban on abortion. The bill is apparently designed to intimidate physicians who provide women with basic reproductive health care. The confusion this proposed ban causes further exploits the misfortune of women whose much-wanted pregnancies have gone tragically wrong.

The proposed ban specifies no period of pregnancy (trimester, weeks gestation, etc.) to which the ban is supposed to apply – or to not apply. In other words, a “partial birth” abortion could be construed to occur during any point in pregnancy. Many people are under the misimpression that a “partial birth” abortion is a euphemism for an abortion performed late in pregnancy.

Nationwide, late-term abortions constitute less than .1% of all abortions. Doctors only perform a late-term procedure where:

- 1) a fetus is lethally malformed, and
- 2) a live birth endangers the mother's health.

Twice before, Congress has passed prohibitions on these vital medical procedures. However, President Clinton vetoed both bans because, like the current legislation, those bills lacked exceptions for the health of the mother. As written, the current ban will disallow a late-term procedure even where the woman's health is threatened.

Anti-choice advocates, including President Bush and House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, support the ban. The President of the pro-life Family Research Council stated that the ban "would add to the momentum toward overturning Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision that established abortion rights."

Many legal experts believe that the ban is inconsistent with the basic legal structure set forth in Roe v. Wade. The current “partial birth” abortion ban is far-reaching. The legislation even goes so far as to allow a fetus' father to sue for damages.

State and federal courts have already struck down 2/3 of the more than 30 pieces of state legislation attempting to ban the medical procedure. The remaining laws are now being challenged in courthouses across the country.

When President Bush signs the federal “partial birth” abortion ban into law, pro-choice advocates will again be forced to seek legal redress. The National Abortion Federation will lead a coalition of pro-choice organizations, including NARAL Pro-Choice America, in challenging the law's constitutionality.

When the case comes before the Supreme Court, its fate will be decided in large part by the Court's composition. If just one of the nine United States Supreme Court Justices resigns and President Bush replaces her or him with an anti-choice justice, then Roe v. Wade will be in serious danger. A woman's right to privacy – including the right to control decisions regarding her own body – will be jeopardized.

Colposcopy Clinics (cont.)

Of the women who underwent the procedure, more than 33% were diagnosed with high-grade lesions. This means that a corrective surgical procedure is required – treatment that is beyond the scope of our nurse practitioners. Understandably, this diagnosis causes women great fear and apprehension.

The Center's staff members tried to help women schedule the follow-up surgical procedures with private practitioners. The difficulty they encountered scheduling these appointments highlighted a serious health care need in this community: without an established doctor-patient relationship, most women must wait months for surgical treatment.

As a result of the ongoing and intentional efforts of the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center to build stronger working relationships with the local obstetrical and gynecological community, referral mechanisms were established to better meet the treatment needs of these women. This is the type of proactive solution that the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center creates for the women of this community.

Screening, diagnosis, and treatment – all in a compassionate environment.

Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center Presents:
Women Sharing Knowledge and Power: Health in Our Hands? Health in Our Hands!

Saturday, November 22, 2003
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Wellman Commons
Bangor Theological Seminary
Bangor, Maine

PROGRAM

- 8:00 – 9:00 Registration
- 9:00 – 9:15 Welcome – Ruth L. Lockhart, Executive Director, Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center
- 9:15 – 10:15 Introduction and Keynote Address – The Dirigo Health Plan and its Impact on Maine Women – Trish Riley, Director, Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance
- 10:15 – 10:30 Questions and Answers
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 12:00 Dirigo Response Panel and Discussion
- 12:00 – 1:15 Lunch
- 1:15 – 1:45 Women With Wings Performance
- 1:45 – 2:00 Break
- 2:00 – 4:00 Afternoon Concurrent Workshops (please select one)
1. Holistic Family Healthcare: Getting Ready for Winter, Donna Kraft-Smith
 2. Empowerment: The Key to Better Healthcare, Linda J. Morneault
 3. Care for Yourself with Yoga, Barbara Lyon
 4. Energy Medicine: A Holistic Approach to Healing, Lisa LeBel
 5. Reproductive Rights: Past, Present, and What is the Future?, A panel of activists will discuss issues of reproductive choice and the challenges facing choice in the future.

GENERAL INFORMATION

People with Disabilities

This conference is wheelchair accessible. Sign language interpretation will be provided. Please notify us if other accommodations are needed.

Child Care

Free child care is provided. However, you must provide meals, snacks, and drinks for your child(ren). Please register early so that we can arrange adequate staffing and plan age-appropriate activities.

Women's Organizations

Printed information and display areas will be available.

Continuing Education Credits

An application for University of Maine credit is pending.

DIRECTIONS

From the South

From I-95, take exit 47. Turn right onto Union Street. Drive approximately 8/10 of a mile. The Bangor Theological Seminary's driveway is the first right after Pond Street. A black and gold sign clearly marks the Seminary and its parking lot. Wellman Commons is the brick building next to the parking lot.

From the North

From I-95, take exit 47. Turn left onto Union Street. Drive approximately 8/10 of a mile. The Bangor Theological Seminary's driveway is the first right after Pond Street. A black and gold sign clearly marks the Seminary and its parking lot. Wellman Commons is the brick building next to the parking lot.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Name _____ Conference Fee (includes lunch and breaks and conference materials)
Address _____ \$30 regular fee – prepaid
 \$25 morning only (includes lunch)
 \$25 afternoon only (includes lunch)
Telephone (day) _____ (evening) _____ \$20 students and attendees over age 65
E-mail Address _____ \$35 on-site registration
 \$35-\$50 Conference Sponsor*
 Other*
 Additional tax-deductible contribution*

*We ask that you pay what you can afford. Women without the ability to pay the conference fee are encouraged to attend. Tax-deductible contributions exceeding the regular fee will help to make the conference available to all women.

Afternoon Workshop Choice (please select one) # _____ Do you require child care? yes no
Number and ages of children _____

_____ Check enclosed (Please make check payable to MWWHC. Mail to: MWWHC, P.O. Box 918, Bangor, ME 04402-0918 with your registration information.)

_____ Please bill my MasterCard or Visa Number _____ Signature _____
Expiration date _____

Calendar of Events

Tuesday, October 14:

Happy 93rd Birthday to Mabel Wadsworth

Friday, October 24, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at the University of New England in Biddeford:

Making the Connection: Human Health and Environmental Exposures

Offered by Physicians for Social Responsibility Conference, co-sponsored by the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center

For more information call: 772-6714

Tuesday, November 11 at the University of Maine:

Surviving Poverty

Offered by Maine Association of Interdependent Neighborhoods

For more information call: 626-7058.

Saturday, November 22, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Bangor Theological Seminary:

Annual Health Conference: Women Sharing Knowledge and Power: Health in Our Hands? Health in Our Hands!

See newsletter insert for further information.

"The extremely professional and caring providers are the biggest reason I go to the Center."
- client

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