

Standing strong

Planned Parenthood CEO David Greenberg talks about what's at stake if federal cuts go through

BY ISRAEL BAYER
STAFF WRITER

Planned Parenthood of Columbia-Willamette serves 60,000 women, men and teens each year in centers located throughout Oregon and SW Washington. It is the largest planning and reproductive rights organization in the region, providing a broad range of sexual and reproductive health care, family planning and myriad other medical services, including education and cancer screenings.

In charge of all of these programs is President and CEO Dr. David Greenberg — a quiet and soft-spoken advocate who has a long history of working for women's rights

and navigating complex systems surrounding reproductive rights. Greenberg has been with the local chapter of Planned Parenthood since 2001. He knows all too well that Planned Parenthood has been under attack for decades in this country, and that the latest round of legislation aimed at destroying the heart of the organization is just another obstacle in the long journey to maintain the rights of women, men and teens seeking

professional medical services.

Street Roots spoke with Greenberg about the recent legislative attacks, and the politics that surround the services Planned Parenthood provides.

Israel Bayer: *There are a lot of misconceptions out there around what Planned Parenthood actually offers to individuals and families. Can you talk a little bit about the services Planned Parenthood offers to people, specifically for low-income folks?*

David Greenberg: Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette (PPCW) provides more than 60,000 women, men and teens with access to basic, preventive sexual and reproductive health care every year.

Ninety-five percent of the services we provide are preventive service — birth control and family planning, gynecological exams and Pap tests, screenings for breast and cervical cancer, and the testing and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. Less than five percent are for abortion services. PPCW offers permanent birth control options at our health centers — vasectomy for men, and Adiana for women. We also offer colposcopy and LEEP

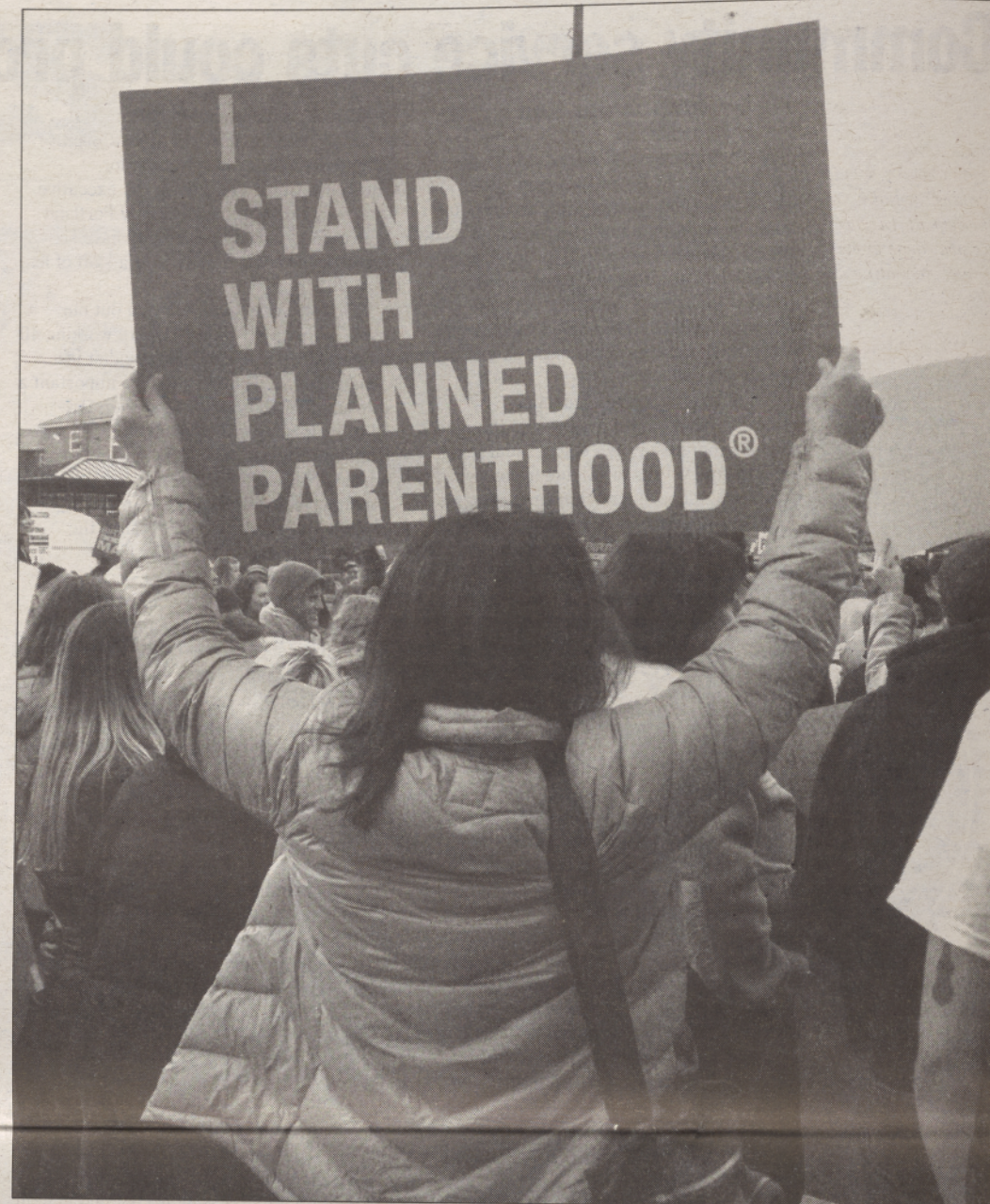


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procedures (to test for and prevent cervical cancer).

The vast majority, 92 percent, of PPCW's patients are low-income. More than 75 percent of our patients rely on some kind of federal funding to pay for their reproductive health care services at Planned Parenthood. For many of our patients, Planned Parenthood is the only health care provider they see every year. Without Planned Parenthood, many would have nowhere else to go.

I.B.: *The Republican Party appears to be on the warpath, using the guise of deficit reduction to strip not only Planned Parenthood's funding, but also groups like AmeriCorps and public broadcasting. How is Planned Parenthood responding to these attacks?*

D.G.: In attacking Planned Parenthood, the House Republican leadership has launched an outrageous assault on the millions of Americans who rely on Planned Parenthood for primary and preventive health care.

Planned Parenthood supporters are standing up and letting their elected officials know how important Planned Parenthood is to them, and how crucial our services are to the communities we serve. We are asking our supporters to make sure their voices

are heard, and to ensure that elected officials know how much support Planned Parenthood has across the nation. More than half a million supporters have signed our online petition, thousands of postcards, letters, and emails have been sent, and rallies have been coordinated across the country.

The amendment to cut Planned Parenthood off from federal funding does nothing to reduce the deficit; it does nothing to improve the economy. In fact, health professionals will actually lose their jobs as a result, and, most egregiously, it takes health care away from American women who cannot afford to pay for it on their own.

Financially, using the guise of deficit reduction to justify these cuts is ridiculous. Title X services are incredibly effective, helping to prevent nearly one million unintended pregnancies each year, almost half of which would otherwise end in abortion. For every public dollar invested in family planning, \$3.74 is saved in Medicaid-related costs. That's savings to both federal and state governments. Taking family planning services away from women will actually increase the deficit.

I.B.: *Last year, Street Roots exposed a network of right-wing activists who have been*

A protester at the Feb. 21 rally in support of Planned Parenthood in Portland. The House budget bill specifically names Planned Parenthood as being excluded from federal funding.

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