

HEALTH

Pink Ribbon Outrage Leads to Apology

Komen reinstates funding for Planned Parenthood

(AP) — The Susan G. Komen for the Cure breast-cancer charity on Friday abandoned plans to eliminate grants to Planned Parenthood. The startling decision came after three days of virulent criticism that resounded across the Internet, jeopardizing Komen's iconic image.

"We want to apologize to the American public for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives," a Komen statement said.

As first reported by The Associated Press on Jan. 31, Komen had adopted criteria excluding Planned Parenthood from future grants for breast-cancer screenings because it was under government investigation, citing a probe launched by a Florida congressman at the urging of anti-abortion groups.

Komen said it would change the criteria "to make clear that disqualifying investigations must be criminal and conclusive in nature and not political."

"We will continue to fund existing grants, including those of Planned Parenthood, and preserve their eligibility to apply for future grants," the statement said.

Many of Komen's affiliates across the country had openly rebelled against the decision to cut the funding, which totaled \$680,000 in 2011. One affiliate, in Aspen, Colo., had announced Thursday that it would defy the new rules and continue grants to its local Planned Parenthood partner.



Susan G. Komen for the Cure founder Nancy Brinker makes an address on the organization's website.

In addition, Komen was inundated with negative comments via emails, on Twitter and on its Facebook page. Many of the messages conveyed a determination to halt gifts to Komen — organizer of the popular Race for the Cure events — because of the decision.

Meanwhile, Planned Parenthood was reporting an outpouring of support — donations large and small, triggered by the Komen decision, that it said surpassed \$900,000.

Planned Parenthood's president, Cecile Richards, thanked those donors Friday and welcomed Komen's change of heart.

"We are enormously grateful that the Komen Foundation has clarified its grantmaking criteria," Richards said. "What these past few days have demonstrated

is the deep resolve all Americans share in the fight against cancer."

Through the Komen grants, Planned Parenthood says its health centers provided nearly 170,000 clinical breast exams and more than 6,400 mammogram referrals over the past five years.

Komen, in its statement, said it was immediately starting an outreach to its affiliates and supporters to get the charity back on track.

"We urge everyone who has participated in this conversation across the country over the last few days to help us move past this issue," Komen said. "We do not want our mission marred or affected by politics — anyone's politics."

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Vaccine Urged for Both Sexes

Health authorities on Friday urged all boys age 11-12 to get a routine vaccination against the most common sexually transmitted disease, human papillomavirus, or HPV.

The HPV vaccine has been approved for girls since 2006, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had not expressly urged it for boys, though boys were included among those who could receive it to prevent certain cancers

and genital warts.

Health experts have expressed hope that if pre-teen boys and girls are both encouraged to get the vaccine, the rate of infection will decrease in the general population.

About half of all sexually active adults will get HPV in their lifetime. There are more than 100 types of HPV, and most clear the body on their own, but some strains can linger and lead to cancer.