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Planned Parenthood announces new Troy health center location

By Record staff
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TROY, N.Y. — Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood (UHPP) launched The Campaign for Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood: A Place for Everyone, to raise \$7.2 million to support sexual health care services and education in Albany, Columbia, Greene and Rensselaer Counties.

Of the \$7.2 million, \$5 million will create a Patient Access Fund while \$2.2 million will improve existing health care facilities in Troy and Hudson.

According to a news release, the newly created Patient Access Fund will ensure seamless health care access for our patients, no matter what; and the money raised for facilities will allow UHPP to continue to provide high-quality health care in facilities that welcome patients with warmth and respect.

UHPP serves all those who need care, no matter their zip code, immigration status, income level, or access to insurance. The response from supporters has been overwhelmingly positive with \$5.6 million or 76% of goal already raised.

“UHPP is committed to providing a place where patients feel valued and respected and to provide the best care, no matter what. We are establishing a Patient Access fund to be prepared no matter what the national picture looks like, no matter what is in NYS budget, no matter our patient’s ability to pay, we will be able to provide care to anyone who needs us,” UHPP President/CEO Chelly Hegan said in the release.

The Opalka Family Center for Reproductive Health and Education will be located at 120 Hoosick St.

Officials said the new Troy Health Center will be part of a Medical Arts Building located in the former Peebles department store on Hoosick Street and house a reception area and waiting area, eight patient rooms, a recovery room, one wellness counseling office, and a shared teen space and community room. The center will be conveniently located with ample parking and on a bus line.

“UHPP is excited to move to this new location which will be convenient for our patients and provide a safe and confidential experience. The Opalka Family Center in Troy will be one third larger than the current health center allowing us to continue to expand services and be able to meet the needs of our community,” Hegan said.

“We are proud to support Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood. We can't emphasize more strongly our belief that good healthcare at all levels increases the quality of life and economic vitality of communities,” Chet and Karen Opalka said in the release. “As Americans, we have been blessed to live in a country that offers some of the best

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technology, educational opportunities and level of healthcare available in the world.

"Access to quality health services is a right for all human beings and should not just be an exclusive luxury for people of privilege. The education and counseling programs that Planned Parenthood provides is an important link to building a stronger community and a brighter future for all of us in the Capital Region,"

The Community and Teen room will be a shared space that will also be used as a community room for staff meetings, group therapy sessions, public programs such as Teach-ins, healthy parent and child programs, and education programs, and will be available for small, local non- profits to use who do not have the funding or resources to host meetings and programs on their own.

UHPP understands and embraces the idea that "intersectionality" is vital to lift up the organization. It looks forward to working with other organizations based in Troy, joining together to help patients, clients, and the broader community.

In 2010, UHPP's Albany health center moved to its current location on Central Avenue. The building is set back from the road in a multi-use building, and is directly in front of a bus stop, making it safe, private, and accessible for patients.

The consultation and examination rooms were designed to foster a welcoming environment that delivers personalized, high quality health care. Since the move, UHPP has provided healthcare to 35% more people since 2009.

UHPP wanted to offer the same welcoming facilities to patients in Columbia, Greene, and Rensselaer counties. UHPP determined that it was time to upgrade the Troy and Hudson Health Centers. UHPP used funds from the prestigious Health Care Transformation Grant from the New York State Department of Health to fund relocation and renovation efforts.

In Feb. 2019, UHPP opened the new health center at 804 Columbia Street in Hudson. The improved health center served 25% more people in 2019 in Columbia and Greene counties and the Berkshires region than it saw in 2018.

More than half of UHPP's patients live below the poverty line. Throughout New York State, 57% of Planned Parenthood's patients are covered by Medicaid. For many, UHPP is the only reproductive health care provider in their area. Funds are being raised to build resilience to the ongoing attacks from Washington.

The Patient Access Fund will ensure that whatever happens to grants, the New York State budget, UHPP's ability to bill Medicaid for its services, or any other threats "yet to be seen" - patients will get the service they need regardless of their ability to pay. Support local journalism.

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Planned Parenthood is uniquely positioned to provide this care. As one of the nation's leading providers of sexual and reproductive health care, UHPP will continue to be a place for patients, students, and community.

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