

# Planned Parenthood Celebrates Kingston Reopening

Sep 29, 2021



*Elected officials, community based organizations and staff joined in as Planned Parenthood of Greater New York celebrated the reopening of its Kingston Health Center on September 24, 2021 that included a ribbon-cutting ceremony. HUDSON VALLEY PRESS/ Chuck Stewart, Jr.*

**KINGSTON** – Planned Parenthood of Greater New York (PPGNY) held a reopening and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday for their Kingston health center.

Several elected officials were present to share in the festivities and show their support for the reopening, joining community partners, as they welcomed patients back for in-person health care services.

In-person health care services at the Kingston location were temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time PPGNY consolidated clinical resources, including staff and critical PPE across its network to preserve the future of quality, affordable sexual and reproductive health care.

Joy Calloway, Interim CEO, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York stated, "We are so pleased to welcome patients back into our Kingston health center. With the pace of the pandemic waning and more people receiving lifesaving COVID-19 vaccinations, we're proud to be able to connect people to care during this time of tremendous healing. PPGNY

health centers will bring essential sexual and reproductive health services and education back to communities that have suffered the brunt of the pandemic, most of which are Black, Latinx, immigrant, and people with low incomes. We are also proud to enhance our innovative health care delivery options, including telehealth, to meet the on-demand needs of the people we serve.

“We are recovering from a public health crisis that has reshaped our organization and our nation. PPGNY may not look the same once this pandemic is over, but our mission is resolute. We’re creating a world where all people have the information, power, and resources they need to make their own decisions about their bodies, their families, and their future.”



*Merle McGee, Chief Equity and Engagement Officer, offers remarks as Planned Parenthood celebrates the reopening of its Kingston Health Center on September 24, 2021. HUDSON VALLEY PRESS/ Chuck Stewart, Jr.*

Merle McGee, Chief Equity and Engagement Officer, Planned Parenthood of Greater New York, noted that the organization has served Kingston for over 80 years. “These are our communities. These are our people and these are our patients,” McGee said, referring to those who have traditionally been disproportionately affected by systemic barriers to accessing health care due to racist and discriminatory policies.

McGee noted that 2021 has been the worst legislative year ever for abortion rights since *Roe v. Wade*. “So the re-openinig of the Kingston

health center is not only a symbol of our recovery from COVID-19, and that health crisis, but it serves as a vital resource for people across the country who will have to turn to PPGNY, and even this health center for vital service – compassionate, non-judgemental health care,” McGee said.

Turning to the staff who were present McGee said, “During New York’s darkest days, you showed up to do the work, to ensure that the Mid-Hudson Valley was able to access our services – no matter what – and we thank you, we all thank you!”

Ulster County Executive Pat Ryan said the year has been very difficult in many ways, but this reopening is a positive symbol. “This is a positive moment and boost that our community desperately needed and we are so appreciative to Planned Parenthood for replanting the flag here in Kingston. This is not just about Kingston. This is not just about Ulster County. You’re spread so thin and there is so much need. We have 180,00 residents in the county, so many in tremendous need of the services you provide here. So we are appreciative and we stand behind you.”

New York State Senator Michelle Hinchey thanked the frontline workers of PPGNY repeatedly, and called Planned Parenthood a “lifeline.”

“This is really an exciting day,” Hinchey said. “The work that all of you do is so profoundly important. Whether it was fighting thru COVID to provide people the services they need or just the support that they need... Thank you. Because without you we are all less served and it’s a much more dangerous place for everyone in our community.”

Kingston Mayor Steve Noble said, “I know so many of our Kingston residents, and beyond here in Ulster County, come to this location for their necessary health services. When we think about health care, all of us believe health care is a human right and that’s why we’re here and that’s what you fight for every single day and it’s unfortunate that

there are people in this country that don't believe that and it's  
unfortunate there people that don't believe women have a right to  
choose how they want to handle and treat their bodies."