

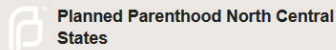
From: "Sarah Stoesz, Planned Parenthood North Central States" <online@ppncs.org>

Date: July 28, 2020 at 7:30:54 AM CDT

To:

Subject: **Owning Our Past: Statement on Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger**

Reply-To: online@ppncs.org



Dear [REDACTED]

Like many organizations today, we are reckoning with elements of our past and present that contribute to the structural racism that continues to plague our country. We know that to achieve our mission of reproductive and sexual health and freedom, we must be clear about where we stand in relation to our history and we must take action to dismantle systems of oppression that persist today.

As a health care organization with over 100 years of history, Planned Parenthood provides crucial health services and we also acknowledge that some of our current work was built on a harmful past. Our founder, Margaret Sanger, perpetuated a number of problematic beliefs and actions. We want to be very clear that we vehemently denounce her ideology that certain people — specifically people of color, people with low incomes, and people with disabilities — should be prevented from having children. This repugnant belief runs directly counter to our organization's current mission of supporting every person in choosing when and whether to become a parent.

Sanger's promotion of eugenics was egregious and wrong. While we acknowledge the benefits that we have reaped from her advocacy for birth control, we take responsibility for the damage that was done. She willfully ignored the incredible harm that her beliefs caused, especially to people of color, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. We condemn that behavior.

We must also recognize that today, anti-reproductive rights activists continue to attack Sanger as a strategy to undermine the crucial services Planned Parenthood currently provides. Those opposed to safe, legal abortion have [cynically tried to perpetuate a myth that our organization "promotes Black genocide."](#) We support people to make their own decisions to control their own lives and futures. This autonomy is especially important for Black people and all people of color in this country, who face structural racism, including barriers to sexual and reproductive freedom and health care.

Today, Planned Parenthood's purpose is to build a world in which every person — regardless of race, income, insurance, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, or immigration status — can receive expert, compassionate health care, education, and information without shame or judgment. Our goal is to continue to improve and expand health care and education for those we serve. To do so, we are owning our organization's history and are committed to addressing the implicit bias and structural racism that continues to exist within our organization and communities.

With participation from all aspects of our organization, we will be reexamining how we talk about Sanger in all of our materials and spaces and will be revamping how we present our history in all forms. We are dedicated to working through the many layers of this issue so we can improve our services across our region.

With commitment, hope, and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Sarah'.

Sarah Stoesz
President and CEO
Planned Parenthood North Central States

Visit our website.

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