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The Family Medicine Reproductive Health Network Enewsletter

A project of the Reproductive Health Access Project (RHAP)

PO Box 21191 • New York, NY 10025 • Tel: 917-586-3260 • Fax: 314 584-3260
info@reproductiveaccess.org • www.reproductiveaccess.org

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The Enewsletter of the **Family Medicine Reproductive Health Network** seeks to link faculty and trainees across the country, collaborating to integrate abortion into the practices of new clinicians. The Network is a project of the Reproductive Health Access Project (RHAP). This month the Enewsletter focuses on developing leadership skills among Family Medicine residents and physicians.

The most recent statistics gathered by the Guttmacher Institute illustrate the continuing decline in the number of physicians who provide abortion services to their patients (http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html). To help reverse this trend, RHAP is working to overcome barriers to integrating abortion into practice, and is exploring how to develop leaders in the next generation of family physicians.

Leadership Development Opportunities

RHAP has launched the **Falencki Fellowship in Reproductive Health Care and Advocacy**, which provides a full year of training in reproductive health and opportunities to teach, give presentations at academic meetings, and publish on reproductive health. Our first fellow, Honor McNaughton, has been working on planning, developing and finally opening a women's reproductive health free clinic; developing talks for Medical Students for Choice, for residencies, and for academic meetings; mentoring residents; writing research proposals, articles and a book chapter for publication. We are seeking a 2008 Fellow. For more information visit our website: <http://www.reproductiveaccess.org/events/rhf08.htm>

Another strategy for developing new leadership is through the use of mentoring relationships. We encourage our network members to identify opportunities where residents can act as co-presenters at professional conferences, provide lectures for Medical Students for Choice, and develop ongoing relationships with mentors.

Overcoming Barriers

New physicians may face a range of obstacles to applying the abortion skills they learned in residency. Obstacles may include passive or active resistance from peers or administrators or nursing, community boards or institutional religious affiliation, refusal of malpractice carriers to sell liability coverage, a lack of an ultrasound machine, or the need for more training. Simply being the new physician in a health center makes it hard to initiate change. Experienced physicians can be an invaluable resource for these new physicians.

In November, RHAP invited a number of NYC-based community physicians (primarily recent graduates) to discuss their progress on integrating abortion. Twenty-six family physicians attended! This gathering (see photo) took place in Linda Prine's home. In addition to providing a supportive setting to re-energize these physicians to provide the full range of reproductive health services to their patients, RHAP was able to create an opportunity for advice exchange as well as concrete assistance which enabled several of the physicians to move forward and begin providing abortions. Others learned new ways to get IUDs for patients. It was rewarding to hear what everyone else was struggling with and to help everyone feel less isolated. We encourage other Network members to consider convening similar meetings with former trainees and community physicians.

Survey of New Graduates

RHAP once again seeks your assistance in delivering our survey to graduating residents. The survey helps us track how much training family medicine residents have received and what they might need to integrate abortion into their new practice sites. It also allows us to hook up graduates with potential mentors near their first job. Please direct your residents to https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=7UmD93Q1oVSdK82rKmR_2fqA_3d_3d and encourage them to complete the brief survey.

Mark your calendars!

There will be a family medicine luncheon at the NAF conference on Monday, April 7 on training issues. Please plan to join us if you are attending the NAF conference.

If you are coming to the STFM Annual meeting in Baltimore, please join RHAP for a dinner meeting at STFM on Saturday, May 3, at 6:30 PM. Please RSVP using the following link if you can join us: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=AYFZo9tVQiHNJ0yOTrX4Jg_3d_3d

Please share this Enewsletter with other interested clinicians and students.

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