



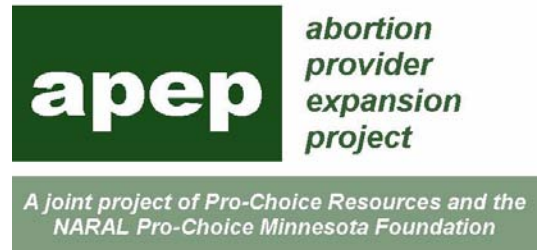
# PRO-CHOICE MINNESOTA NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF NARAL PRO-CHOICE MINNESOTA & NARAL PRO-CHOICE MINNESOTA FOUNDATION

## Early medication abortion: Increasing the capacity of community healthcare providers to serve Minnesota's women

Mifepristone, or medication abortion (once called RU-486 or "the abortion pill"), offers women a safe, private, and non-surgical option for ending an early pregnancy.

When the FDA first approved mifepristone for use in the U.S. in 2000, pro-choice advocates boldly predicted that the drug would open new avenues of reproductive health-care access—women could obtain abortions much earlier in pregnancy and have more autonomy over the process, abortion could be performed without surgical equipment, and perhaps most significantly, as a safe and private option administered in primary care clinics, this method would allow clinicians and their patients to avoid the intense public scrutiny and stigmatization endured by abortion clinics, their staff, and the women who need their care. Women could seek treatment and physicians could dispense it without fear of being targets of terrorism: *abortion could be mainstreamed.*



Nearly a decade later, it is still too early to fully measure the impact of medication abortion, but a report issued in January 2008 by the Alan Guttmacher Institute maps some interesting trends. While this method has been slow to live up to its initial promise, its use appears to have played an important role in halting the decades-long decline in abortion providers. As an early abortion option, medication abortion accounted for nearly 12% of all abortions in Minnesota in 2006, up from just 2.4% in 2001; at the same time, the percentage of abortions performed very early in pregnancy increased by about 3%. However, the overall number of sites offering abortion remained essentially unchanged during this period, trends that are mirrored nationally.

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## Volunteer of the Year: Amanda Carnahan

NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota is proud to present the Volunteer of the Year for 2007: Amanda Carnahan. Amanda's dedication is well-known in the pro-choice activist community. Whether it's phonebanking, stuffing envelopes, publishing letters to the editor, attending rallies and marches, or standing out in the subzero chill at 6 am on a Saturday morning to assist patients arriving for their appointments at Dr. Hanson's clinic, Amanda has done it all. And for the past several months she has also single-handedly coordinated the patient escort program through NARAL at Dr. Hanson's, recruiting and training fellow volunteer clinic escorts, scheduling volunteers for the weekly shift and ensuring that the women arriving at the clinic can make their way safely past the ring of intimidating protesters. Amanda does all this in her free time, and we talked with her to find out what motivates her:



Amanda Carnahan

**NPCM:** Tell us a bit about yourself.

**Amanda:** I am a project coordinator for a construction company in Eagan, I have a bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management (that is currently not being used), and I live in Minneapolis. I plan on going to law school and getting my master's degree in Women's Studies in the near future. I have lofty dreams and big goals...and that is what drives me every day. I love politics and thrive on learning new things.

**NPCM:** Why are you pro-choice?

**Amanda:** Why not?! I have been pro-choice as long as I can remember – I actually don't really know what has driven me in that direction but one of the first memories of my pro-choice

### See inside for...

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- ◆ Canvasser of the month
- ◆ 35 Roe Stories
- ◆ Campus Events



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*The Abortion Provider Expansion Project (APEP) is a collaborative program between the NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Foundation and Pro-Choice Resources.*

## NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Spring Interns

*NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota would like to thank all of our wonderful interns for their support, dedication, and hard work. We could not function without you. Thank you!*

|                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Kate Sykes       | Choice Lobby Network Manager          |
| Lynn Cohen       | Pharmacy Access Project Manager       |
| Liz Tomsich      | Legislative Intern                    |
| David Zeller     | Pro-Choice Lobby Day Intern           |
| Jan Arleth       | Legislative Intern                    |
| Anna Losacano    | Carleton College                      |
| Rhea Muchalla    | Gustavus                              |
| Beth Orlikowski  | Macalester                            |
| Amanda Reinarts  | Mankato State                         |
| Katie Berning    | Moorhead State                        |
| Adja Gildersleve | Rochester Community Technical College |
| Amber Micheal    | St. Cloud State                       |
| Anya Galli       | St. Olaf                              |
| Chere Bergerson  | UM-Duluth                             |
| Jaimee Towers    | UM-Morris                             |
| Rachel Anderson  | UM-Twin Cities                        |
| Linsey Wallace   | UM-Twin Cities                        |
| Erika Staub      | Winona State                          |
| Rebecca Ek       | Winona State                          |
| Courtney Nelson  | Bemidji State                         |

The mission of NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota is to develop and sustain a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.

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life came from watching the protestors at Planned Parenthood in St. Paul and really not understanding why they were yelling at the woman walking in the clinic. I was probably 15 and just did not get it. I guess you could say I was raised pro-choice since both of my parents believe strongly in a woman's right to choose.

**NPCM:** *Why do you think it's important to volunteer for Choice?*

**Amanda:** It makes a difference in the smallest possible way, but really does mean the world to people. As an escort I wonder sometimes why I get out of my warm bed to stand in the cold and be yelled at for being a horrible person...but then there is always a certain patient who looks at me with those eyes that remind me why I sacrifice my Saturday mornings for them and it makes it all worth it in the end.

**NPCM:** *Why did you start volunteering with NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota?*

**Amanda:** It started as a way for me and my new work friend Jackie to bond and really feel like we were changing this world we didn't agree with. We have become the best of friends since then and will continue to fight for choice.

**NPCM:** *Tell us a bit about your role with the escort program; what are some of the best/worst things about keeping it running?*

**Amanda:** Escorting...I live and breathe it some days! I do worry about not having escorts at the clinic and try to think of ways to get more people involved. I love the program and I really do hope that I am doing it justice. The best part is that look from the patients, the thanks from the doctors and staff, and just knowing that I am there for a reason beyond me. The worst thing about the program is the struggle to get people more involved. I understand that we all have lives and a million other things going on, but it can be frustrating trying to pull the schedules together – but I am always up for a challenge!

**If you are interested in learning more about becoming a clinic escort, please contact us at [volunteer@prochoiceminnesota.org](mailto:volunteer@prochoiceminnesota.org) or 651-602-7655.**

## Canvasser of the Month: *Jess Hausauer*

When I first started canvassing I didn't really know what to expect. I wasn't necessarily thrilled about going door-to-door, but I understood the importance of organizing the Pro-Choice Movement. Seven months later, I fully appreciate the power of meeting face-to-face with the people that care about this issue as much as I do. I have been amazed by the kindness and openness of others, as many of you have invited me in as dinner was cooling, the phone was ringing, and the kids were screaming. Thank you for empowering me as I hope I have empowered you.

## 35 Roe Stories

In honor of the 35th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota sent out a request for stories answering the question, "What does Roe mean to you?". Some of the stories we received were short and to the point while others were deeply personal. Here are a few:

*"Simply it means freedom. The freedom to take care of ourselves and our families. I believe everyone has the right to live life how they want. We are free to love and believe what we want. The freedom to our own bodies is just as natural."*

*"On this publicly momentous and yet deeply personal anniversary, I give thanks. I am thankful for the work and sacrifice of the women and men who came before me. Their courage and selflessness secured comprehensive reproductive health care for generations of women to come. I am here today because of Roe. My life is different, better because of my freedom to choose. In honor of all women, of my predecessors, myself - I continue the work. I give thanks for the opportunity to fight and to give voice to the cause."*

*"People forget that the decision of Roe v Wade was also meaningful to women for health reasons."*

*In 1969, before Roe v Wade, I was happily pregnant with my second child. However, during my fourth month checkup, the doctor told me that the fetus had died. There was no longer a heartbeat, and my uterus was shrinking in size.*

*Once I had gotten over the shock, I thought that I would be admitted to the hospital to have it removed from my body. I imagine my horror when my doctor told me that the law said I was pregnant and he could do nothing for me*

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Roe Anniversary Events on Campus

NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota's Campus Representatives celebrated the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roe v. Wade in a few different ways. The Representatives have free will in determining how they celebrate events like the Roe decision. This gives them the ability to do what they feel is most effective for their student body and campus environment.

The most common action taken was to spread the word about the importance of the Roe decision. This was done on the majority of our campuses through the time honored method of tabling. Information was given out to students and effort was made to collect stories from students about the importance of Roe v. Wade. Our Representative in Morris tabled next to the campus anti-choice group and had a much better turnout than her neighbors. The Carls for Choice put an information sheet about the importance of Roe together and handed it out on campus. They wanted to counter any negative feelings about Roe as well as communicate a message about the importance of Roe and how it relates to real life situations.

Moorhead had a concert and fundraiser. Their Rock for Roe event served a two-fold purpose. One was to celebrate the Roe anniversary; the second was to raise money for the Women in Need Fund. They also tabled to make students aware of the Roe v. Wade anniversary on January 22.

All of the campuses did a fantastic job of celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Each stressed the importance of 35 years of legal abortion and the need to defend the right to choose. These campuses did their part to help to carry the next generation of pro-choice students forward.

## Roe Anniversary Wrap-Up

"Opportunity is like an old man's hair, it only comes around once." These are the words of Dr. Joycelyn Elders, keynote speaker at the MN Choice Coalition's 35th Anniversary of Roe v Wade dinner and celebration in January of this year. Dr. Elders reminded the over 400-person crowd that to sustain a meaningful pro-choice movement, we must seize the opportunities that present themselves, and we must be unified. The crowd was also entertained by author and blogger Jessica Valenti, who emceed the program.

Thank you to everyone who joined the MN Choice Coalition in celebrating the 35th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade. The event was an enormous success, drawing pro-choice supporters from across the state. Volunteers, staff, activists, and community leaders came together to celebrate the many victories the pro-choice movement has seen in the last 35 years, and to inspire each other to keep working toward reproductive freedom and equality.

The dinner event was part of a larger series of events put on by the MN Choice Coalition; The 5 Days of Action included the dinner, a book signing by Jessica Valenti, an art event, a movie screening, participation in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day march, and a preview of the upcoming legislative session. The MN March Coalition includes Midwest Health Center for Women, MN NOW, MN Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Foundation, Pro-Choice Resources, Planned Parenthood of MN SD ND, the MN Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women and women-winning: MN Women's Campaign Fund.

## Roe Stories Cont'd

*(Continued from page 3)*

*medically! Instead, I had to go home and was told to come in every week for a pregnancy test. Until the hormones would work out of my system, the law would consider me pregnant and this would be an "abortion" which would be illegal.*

*What a horrible dilemma! There are risks associated with carrying a dead fetus, so this was potentially threatening to my physical health. This was also devastating to me mentally. I had an 18 month old child to care for alone, as my husband worked on the road. I had no idea what to expect, including possibly spontaneously going into labor while alone.*

*Many women shared this same experience before abortion became legal. People need to know that legislators and judges have no business tying the hands of doctors in making the best medical decisions possible for their patients!"*

**These stories and others are on our website, [www.ProChoiceMinnesota.org](http://www.ProChoiceMinnesota.org) and also our myspace page, [myspace.com/prochoiceminnesota](http://myspace.com/prochoiceminnesota).**

**Please take the time to read them and if you would like to contribute please send your story to Dan at [DanB@ProChoiceMinnesota.org](mailto:DanB@ProChoiceMinnesota.org)**

## Pro-Choice Lobby Day a Success!

On March 4th, 2008 NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota hosted its annual Pro-Choice Lobby Day, and we are pleased to announce that it was a raging success! Over 130 Minnesotans came to the State Capitol in St. Paul to lobby their legislators in support of responsible sex education, and more than 150 Minnesotans rallied at noon in the Capitol Rotunda.

Now more than ever, our legislators need to hear the pro-choice voice. They certainly heard it on Pro-Choice lobby day! A diverse group of pro-choice Minnesotans spoke to legislators including students, rural Minnesotans, communities of color, and religious groups for choice. Thank you to all who participated and made Lobby Day so successful.

Here are some photos from this year's Lobby Day. Don't miss the fun next year—stay tuned for info about Pro-Choice Lobby Day 2009!

### Lobby Day pics!



*Pro-Choice rallyers waving their signs*



*Speaker of the House Representative Anderson Kelliher and Senator Pogemiller*



*Rallyers watch from the second floor of the rotunda*

*(Continued from page 1)*

95% of Minnesota's counties have no abortion provider, although 62% of Minnesota women live in these counties, according to the 2005 census bureau. Increasing the capacity of health care providers to offer an early abortion option to their patients would alleviate some of the burdens experienced by women who must currently travel to the Twin Cities or Duluth and spend a few hours in a clinic to take the first dose of medication (provided there is a physician available to administer it), travel a long distance home to take the second dose on the following day, and then return to the clinic for a follow-up appointment a week or two later. Even for those who have the resources, that's a great deal of expense, time from work or school, and time on the road in pursuit of routine healthcare that should be available from a primary care provider.

Addressing this conundrum, NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Foundation's Abortion Provider Expansion Project teamed up with New York's Reproductive Health Access Project last fall to offer an interactive workshop on medication abortion for community healthcare providers. This training, attended by over 40 primary care clinicians, prepared practitioners to expand services in a variety of settings. With both basic and advanced tracks, faculty covered hypothetical patient cases and engaged in a brainstorming session identifying many of the common barriers to implementing medication abortion in a clinic setting. These barriers can range from resistance from support staff who are concerned about community backlash to the prohibitively high cost of malpractice insurance or reimbursement refusals for abortion providers to the lack of resources to purchase the necessary supplies and equipment.

In the near future we hope to conduct a supplementary workshop focused on a step-by-step approach to surmounting these barriers and supporting providers dedicated to offering full-spectrum reproductive healthcare in communities throughout Minnesota.

The Abortion Provider Expansion Project is a collaboration of Pro-Choice Resources and the NARAL Pro-Choice Minnesota Foundation. Funding is made possible by generous grants from the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation and the Women's Foundation of Minnesota.

## Live Art and Concert Roe Action event

On the evening of Saturday, January 19, 2008 a group of about 30 people gathered at the Vine Arts Center in Minneapolis to celebrate the 35th Anniversary of Roe versus Wade. The Live Art and Concert event was day 2 of a series of action events held to celebrate the 35th Anniversary. The event featured wine, snacks and performances by artist, Jao, and several local musicians.



*A close up of Jao's work*



*Artist, Jao, at work*