

Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health

Center research, training, and policy analysis address contraception, family planning, maternal health, adolescent reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV/AIDS. The Center strives to develop preventive solutions to the most pressing domestic and international reproductive health problems. Led by co-directors Philip Darney, MD, MSc, Claire Brindis, DrPH, and J. Joseph Speidel, MD, MPH, a Center staff of 175 is carrying out more than 100 domestic and international projects funded at \$40 million annually.

- Center clinical trials of virtually every new fertility regulation method developed in the past 25 years have helped to determine the best use, safety, and effectiveness of modern contraceptives and abortion technology. These studies have included evaluation of the IUD, contraceptive patch, injections, rings, and implants, as well as emergency contraception (EC). Studies of the use of methotrexate, mifepristone, misoprostol, and manual uterine aspiration have all advanced the field of abortion care.
- Center studies and Center participants' testimony at FDA advisory committee meetings helped convince the committee that EC could be sold over-the-counter (OTC). Center research demonstrated that EC is safe for teenagers and does not lead to risky behavior with respect to exposure to sexually transmitted infections or discontinuation of effective contraception.
- In evaluating the effectiveness of California's publicly-supported family planning program (Family PACT), the Center demonstrated the value of multiple service delivery sites in a large, ethnically-diverse state and estimated cost savings of \$5.33 for every dollar spent on the program over five years. Center studies were crucial to obtaining a Medicaid waiver that brings approximately \$300 million in federal funds to the program annually. Family PACT now reaches nearly 1.6 million low-income clients annually and has contributed to the greatest decline in teen pregnancy over the past decade than any state but Alaska.
- The Center has carried out unique studies in developing countries heavily impacted by AIDS to determine if economic empowerment of young women can reduce transactional sex and if vaginal diaphragms can be used to decrease transmission of HIV.
- The Center, through its International Safe Motherhood Program, is conducting studies on maternal mortality reduction through prevention and treatment of postpartum hemorrhage, the leading cause of maternal death.
- A Center director established the first Family Planning Fellowship in the U.S. to train postdoctoral students in family planning and abortion methods and clinical research methodologies. The Center has led the expansion of this program to 16 new medical schools, of which three have program directors trained at the Center. The Center's Kenneth J. Ryan Residency Training Initiative works to establish abortion training for Ob/Gyn residents. To date, 42 residency programs in the U.S. and one program in Canada have added abortion training to their curricula. The Center's TEACH project has expanded this effort to family practice residency programs. The Family Planning Fellowship, the Ryan Initiative, and the TEACH project are helping to ensure that there will be a new generation of physicians to provide family planning and abortion services.
- The Center is training advanced practice clinicians in safe methods of early pregnancy services in a study that seeks to reverse the critical shortage of abortion providers by making the health care systems and regulatory changes necessary to allow properly trained clinicians to offer early abortion services.

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