Planned Parenthood

Nurse Margaret Sanger opened a birth control clinic with her sister and a friend in 1916, in Brooklyn, N.Y. Their activities were illegal at the time because of a federal and series of state laws known, collectively, as "the Comstock laws." After a raid on the clinic, Sanger appealed her conviction for Comstock violations – which led to liberalization of New York's anti-birth-control statute.

Sanger opened the Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau in 1923 and incorporated the American Birth Control League that same year. Those two organizations ultimately merged and became known as the Planned Parenthood® Federation of America, Inc. (PFFA®)

In 1937, Planned Parenthood® benefitted when the American Medical Association officially recognized birth control as part of general medical practice.

The landmark legal decision in Planned Parenthood's® world of pro-choice occurred on Jan. 22, 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court (in *Roe v. Wade*) acknowledged a woman's constitutional rights to (1) choose abortion and (2) maintain her privacy.

Today, Planned Parenthood® works with 86 regional affiliates in the U.S. It also does advocacy work in 11 foreign countries, according to its website: Cost Rica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Sudan, and Trinidad and Tobago.

On its website, the organization notes that, "Abortions are very common. In fact, more than 1 out of 3 women in the U.S. have an abortion by the time they are 45 years old."

It also lists the following statistics about its services through the end of former President George W. Bush's second term (2008):

- More than 3 million men, women and teens obtain service from U.S. affiliate Planned Parenthood® health centers annually
- Nearly 1 million men, women and teens in other countries obtain service through Planned Parenthood® international programs annually
- More than 15 million people worldwide visit Planned Parenthood® websites every year
- More than 4 million supporters, activists and donors annually back Planned Parenthood® and its "call to take a stand on behalf of reproductive health and freedom."

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