



A Friend in Need

The EMA Fund's Semi-Annual Newsletter

Winter 2008

Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund ♦ P.O. Box 390412 ♦ Cambridge, MA 02139 ♦ 617.354.3839 ♦ emama@nnaf.org

NEWS

EMA IN THE SPOTLIGHT: In September 2007, the website RH Reality Check ran an article featuring the work of abortion funds within the broader context of the struggle against anti-choice politicians. The article's author sought out the EMA Fund's Brianna Boggs as a leading voice in the fight for abortion access. (See page 2 for an excerpt of that article.) Congratulations, Brianna, on so deftly articulating the importance of EMA's work.

SHARE YOUR STORIES INITIATIVE: An integral part of reproductive justice is involving the women we have served in guiding the future of the organization. Through 2008 and beyond, EMA will be actively seeking stories from women who have received assistance from EMA in the past, as well as from donors who value their support of EMA and abortion access in the context of the reproductive justice movement. To share your story, contact us via phone or email; all stories will be recorded anonymously and may be shared on our website in the spring. Watch for more information in our email newsletter.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

IN 2007, THE EMA FUND:

- ♦ made grants to more than 100 women in eastern Massachusetts, making it possible for them to exercise their choice
- ♦ offered financial counseling to more than 150 women residing in Eastern Massachusetts and beyond
- ♦ held two volunteer training sessions and trained more than a dozen enthusiastic new volunteers
- ♦ remained open and available to the women of eastern Massachusetts every day of the year
- ♦ raised \$14,600 in private donations
- ♦ partially reinstated regional funding by extending assistance to the Jane Fund of Central Mass.
- ♦ solidified relationships with area clinics and non-profit health care organizations
- ♦ received an award from the National Network of Abortion Funds for a spoken word presentation about the Hyde Amendment. This presentation has since been used by organizations all over the country.

FEATURE STORY

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE EMA FUND?

Despite healthcare reform and the possible repeal of the Hyde Amendment, the EMA Fund remains necessary

Abortion funds across the country, under the umbrella of the National Network of Abortion Funds, are in the unusual position of advocating their own obsolescence. That every woman has a right to a free and safe abortion is the EMA Fund's core belief.

With Massachusetts's new healthcare system, the push by the National Network of Abortion Funds and its coalition partners to repeal the Hyde Amendment, and the recent retirement and subsequent passing of Henry Hyde (the amendment's author and a strong and persuasive anti-choice figure), EMA might be enticed to unclench a few muscles and slip into visions of a world in which every woman has access to the healthcare she needs.

In truth, the EMA Fund is preparing to face some of our greatest challenges yet.

Massachusetts healthcare reform does not guarantee every woman in Massachusetts a free abortion. Although the new healthcare law mandates that every resident of Massachusetts have affordable

health insurance of some sort, the character of that insurance varies greatly. The law will encourage women who are eligible for MassHealth (state-sponsored healthcare) or Commonwealth Care (state-subsidized healthcare) to apply for that coverage before the need for abortion funding arises, but barriers to access persist. Not all abortion clinics in Massachusetts accept MassHealth, thus requiring women either to travel to another clinic or hospital, or to make up the cost of the actual procedure from their own pockets. Additionally, undocumented women and temporary residents of Massachusetts are often not eligible for state-sponsored or -subsidized healthcare, leaving them in need of additional assistance to cover their abortions.

The new law also requires most employers to offer health insurance plans to their employees, or face tax penalties. If these plans are deemed affordable by the state, employees are required to enter these plans or find independent private insurance coverage. And, as so many women have already discovered, a number of

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ABORTION FUNDS: PUTTING WOMEN'S NEEDS AT THE CENTER

by Andrea Lynch

Public funding for abortion is a now-familiar wedge issue in the anti-abortion lobby's attempt to whittle the core right to abortion down to a near-meaningless sliver. For the anti-abortion crew, public funding for abortion is loosely defined as everything from Planned Parenthood receiving Title X federal family planning grants (so that they can provide women

with contraception that might—horror of horrors—prevent unintended pregnancies)

to allowing Medicaid to cover abortions for women who can't afford health care. The goal, ostensibly, is to make abortions disappear by making it impossible to get one, but anyone who enjoys regular contact with pregnant women (remember them?) knows that such restrictions are far more effective at discriminating against poor women than reducing the abortion rate.

No group is more intimately aware of this reality than the women—largely volunteers—who operate community-based abortion funds across the country....The women who operate the funds are driven by a dual commitment to reproductive rights and economic justice, based on a firm understanding that the core right to abortion is meaningless if millions of women cannot access that right.

Brianna Boggs...serves as board president of the Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund (EMA)...EMA, like most funds across the country, will make small grants to help pay for a procedure, but cannot cover the full cost for any one woman. Instead, Boggs and her colleagues work with women individually to figure out how to raise the money themselves—mapping the resources in their lives, brainstorming ways of generating income, breaking down the problem into manageable steps. For Boggs, it is through this process that

the transformative nature of the work begins to emerge. She reflects:

"I love feminist theory, and it's all very interesting until you get to this crisis moment where you realize, theory's awesome, but what are you actually doing to materially improve women's lives? What are you

"this is the moment that you can absolutely change a woman's life, you can help her change her own life, if this is the right choice for her"

doing? You can talk all day, but there are poor women who don't have access to the things that they need in the world. This is materially improving the lives of women who are living in poverty, who are living in crisis, this is the moment that you can absolutely change a woman's life, you can help her change her own life, if this is the right choice for her."

At the national level, NNAF's campaign to overturn the Hyde amendment—a first step toward improving the lives of women living in poverty—continues to gain momentum. "It's a really exciting time," says Boggs. "It's time to introduce that conversation that it is not appropriate for the federal government to limit funding this way. It's not taking full responsibility for the fact that women deserve a full range of health care. I think that this goes far beyond the right to access abortion, I think that this is about every person having dignity."

Still, on the subject of national advocacy, Boggs stays grounded. "Policy work and legislative work—all of that is incredibly,

incredibly important," she acknowledges. "And a lot of it means absolutely nothing to the woman who says, 'I don't have \$800 by Friday.'" Until that woman has a space and a voice in our national abortion conversation, we can expect more backsliding on the public funding issue by candidates on both sides of the political spectrum. Meanwhile, the phones will keep ringing in the 104 abortion funds across the country, where women's lives continue to unfold.

Excerpted with permission. See the entire article at <http://www.rhrealitycheck.org/node/4783>.



T-SHIRTS AND TANK TOPS AND TOTE BAGS, OH MY!

Wear your support for EMA on your sleeve! We now have t-shirts, totes, stickers, and mouse pads available for sale online. And check back often—we're continually adding new items and slogans. The proceeds from each sale go directly to help women in need of assistance to obtain an abortion. Visit www.CafePress.com/EMAFund. We also welcome submissions for new t-shirt designs! Email us at emama@nnaaf.org to find out more.



MY DONOR STORY

Monthly donor Robbie Samuels shares his reasons for supporting the EMA Fund

I heard about the EMA Fund a little over a year ago from a friend who had been volunteering there and I became a donor after attending my first event.

At the EMA Fund event, I learned about the Hyde Amendment, which prevents the federal government (and its programs like Medicaid) from funding abortion services. I was really surprised to find out that this safe and legal procedure that is a part of women's comprehensive healthcare is not funded! I heard women's stories, in their own voices, of how they were helped by abortion funds just like The EMA Fund all around the country. That night, I was moved to commit my ongoing support, and I asked everyone else there to join me as a monthly EMA Fund donor.

I have a limited amount of money to give, so when I can, I want to give to local, grassroots organizations. And I know that because the EMA Fund is volunteer-run, my money goes directly

Most women who call [EMA] for help won't say they're suffering under the weight of the patriarchy or systems of oppression. They are more likely to say that the problem is they don't have \$500 by Friday.

to help the women that need it. I set up my sustaining monthly gift so that the EMA volunteers won't have to chase me down to renew my gift. I want them to focus on what they do best—helping local women.

Through my connection to the EMA Fund, I have come to see abortion access as a broader social justice issue connected to poverty, access to healthcare, and a woman's right to self-

determination. The work of the EMA Fund cuts through all these issues to deal with the real lives of the women they serve. Most women who call them for help won't say they're suffering under the weight of the patriarchy or systems of oppression. They are more likely to say that the problem is they don't have \$500 by Friday. I give to the EMA Fund because I know that my contribution goes to something real and needed.

Consider becoming a monthly donor yourself; that \$5-10-15-20 a month really does add up and is a tangible method of combating the very real effects of patriarchy and oppression.

Donate now at www.nnaf.org/funds/ema. Tell us your Client or Donor Story at emama@nnaf.org.

CELEBRATE WOMEN'S WORK WITH EMA AND SPARK CRAFT!

The EMA Fund invites you to its first ever stitch-and-destash event!

Let's get together! Join the EMA Fund for an evening of good company, crafty pursuits, and choice conversation. Spark Craft Studios, a local and woman-owned business, has generously donated its space for this celebration of real women's work. EMA board members and volunteers will be on hand to answer your questions about EMA's function and future, or just to help you pick up that dropped stitch. We're eager to trade patterns and stories, and to meet *you*—the real backbone of the EMA Fund. We have so much in common—let's get to know each other and connect with our community. **The event is free for everyone** and refreshments will be provided—bring as many friends as you'd like. But toss a few unneeded skeins of yarn in

What: An evening of stitching, chatting, friend-making, and bargain shopping

When: Wednesday, March 5 from 5pm-9pm. Drop in for half an hour or stick around all evening.



your bag if you can: the event will also include a **De-stash for EMA Sale**. We'll be hauling out our unused yarn, needles, or other crafting supplies to sell, with proceeds going to the EMA Fund. Let's pull out our crochet hooks, pour a glass of wine, and conspire to change the world.

About Spark Craft Studios:

Spark provides a stylish & social environment and the resources you need to make creativity an easy and fun part of everyday life. We invite you to relax in our uniquely designed, upscale studio. Whether you'd like to make a fashionable piece of jewelry to wear to your next big event, design a personalized card for a friend's birthday, or knit a baby blanket for your sister's newest family addition, our Creativity Consultants are here to assist you. Grab a cup of coffee or tea, bring along a friend or two, and get started on an inspiring project at the studio!

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SAVE
THE
DATE!

Mark your calendars: EMA's spring volunteer orientation and training will be held on **April 10 and 12, 2008**. The orientation will introduce trainees to EMA's grantmaking and financial counseling process, prepare them to work with the women who seek EMA's services, and provide them with information on abortion services in the eastern Massachusetts area. Former EMA clients are particularly encouraged to participate. To sign up for this training, email us at emama@nnaf.org or call 617-354-3839 and leave a message.

Interested in other ways to help the EMA Fund? We're always looking for volunteers to assist in our fundraising efforts, administrative tasks, and special projects. Contact us at any time to learn more about the many ways you can help us connect rights to resources!

WORK
WITH
EMA

notice SOMETHING
completely DIFFERENT?

EMA's upgraded! Check out her fancy new logo, courtesy of Sanam Petri, a former Brookline resident and one of EMA's new best friends. EMA also has exciting plans for a sleek new website. *And* EMA is gearing up to launch a quarterly email newsletter, for those of you who can't wait until June to find out how she's been doing. To sign up, send an email to emama@nnaf.org with "subscribe" in the subject line.

So why all the changes?

Since 1999, the Eastern Massachusetts Abortion Fund has been a resource of grants and financial counseling for women who have sought us out. While continuing to honor our primary function, the EMA Fund also plans to reach out to the communities of eastern Massachusetts, both to reassure women of our existence and to provide support to the women we serve in telling their abortion funding stories. Throughout these efforts, the EMA Fund must be clearly and immediately recognizable as an ally and a source of reliable information. To assist the EMA Fund, consider sharing this newsletter with a friend, sending us new names for our mailing list, and displaying items, such as t-shirts and coffee mugs, featuring the new EMA logo. Together, we can ensure that this little orange and gray graphic becomes a symbol of freedom and access to the women of eastern Massachusetts.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE EMA FUND? *continued from page 1*

Medicaid, Indian [Native American] Health Services, military health services, or other federal health insurance (such as the coverage extended to Peace Corps volunteers, federal employees, federal prisoners, and low-income residents of the District of Columbia) must locate other sources of funding to cover the cost of their abortions, else they are forced to carry their unwanted pregnancies to term. Only in 1993 did Congress rewrite the amendment to include exceptions for rape, incest, or life endangerment.

It is almost tedious to say that resistance to the repeal of the Hyde Amendment will be monumental; the political capital of the anti-choice movement is well-proven. The amendment has been in effect for thirty-one years without serious and realistic challenge, and Senator Hyde's recent death may serve as a rhetorical device for supporters of the amendment. Although the challenge to the amendment is well-coordinated, strong, and has some Congressional support, abortion funds cannot be overly sanguine about the future of government-funded abortions. Moreover, as a practical matter, the repeal of the Hyde Amendment would not extend funding to women currently ineligible for Medicaid due to immigration status or to women covered by private insurance that will not pay for abortions.

The spectre of a Roe reversal hangs over our heads, and would result in a tremendous strain on abortion funds in Massachusetts.

Yes, all current Democratic candidates for the presidency are pro-choice. And yes, a pro-choice president may have an effect on the makeup of the Supreme Court in the near future. But what about now? (Many of you may already join the EMA Fund in hoping for the continued health of Justices Stevens and Ginsberg, the most reliably pro-choice members of the current Court.) If last March's decision in *Gonzales v. Carhart* (upholding the federal

abortion ban) taught us anything, it was that we cannot rely on the current Court to respect a woman's right to self-determination and bodily integrity. Since a pro-choice president will probably only be in a

True reproductive justice encompasses all the decisions that an individual makes throughout her reproductive life, and requires special attention to the financial, social, racial, sexual, legal, and class-based contexts in which those decisions are made.

position to replace outgoing pro-choice justices (as the anti-choice justices are unlikely to retire during a pro-choice administration), we must consider what will happen if the current Court hears a direct challenge to *Roe v. Wade*. It takes only four justices' votes to grant a hearing on a particular case, and Justices Scalia and Thomas, at least, are eager for the opportunity to overrule the protections of *Roe*.

If *Roe v. Wade* is overruled, states will regain the right to prohibit abortion entirely. Indeed, in the past few years several states, such as Louisiana and Kentucky, have enacted trigger laws that will automatically criminalize abortion if *Roe* is overruled. As a result, states which will continue to allow abortion will see an increase in what is cynically termed "abortion tourism." Because the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has ruled that a woman's right to abortion is protected by the Massachusetts Constitution, Massachusetts will be one of those destination states. Although the abortion funds in the abortion-hostile states may still exist and offer their services to women

traveling out of state to obtain abortions, much of that assistance will likely be swallowed by travel and accommodation costs. In this event, the EMA Fund, like the other Massachusetts funds and funds in New York, California, and other abortion-friendly states, will assume responsibility for assisting an exponentially greater number of women. As the EMA Fund prepares for the future, we must evaluate our existing practices against this potentially increased burden on our resources. By maintaining our relationship with funds across the country and constructing channels for the reinstatement of regional funding, however, the work we do now may allow us to promise in the future that no woman getting an abortion in Eastern Massachusetts will be without resources.

The EMA Fund will always work toward reproductive justice.

EMA knows that reproductive justice means so much more than realistic access to abortion services. True reproductive justice encompasses all the decisions that an individual makes throughout her reproductive life, and requires special attention to the financial, social, racial, sexual, legal, and class-based contexts in which those decisions are made. When the future arrives—the day in which any woman in the U.S. may obtain a government-funded abortion—the EMA Fund's primary function will be unnecessary. We anticipate this as an opportunity to evolve, to become active in other aspects of the reproductive justice movement, and to continue our legacy of championing the rights of all individuals to be independent and free. To this end, the EMA Fund has charged itself with engaging in meaningful dialogue with the women who seek EMA's assistance and to craft approaches to abortion funding and advocacy based upon these women's experiences—all the while being poised to respond to changes in abortion access, both harmful and triumphant.

JOIN THE EMA FUND BOARD OF DIRECTORS!

We are seeking new board members who are committed to reproductive justice and who might add their skills and experience to our work. We are looking for board members who bring:

- Diversity, in terms of race, age, class, ability, and sexual orientation
- Experience in communications, fundraising, accounting, or financial management
- Legal expertise in nonprofit and/or reproductive law

We invite you to provide us (by email, phone, or mail) with the names and contact information of possible candidates, along with a little bit about why you think they'd be a great fit. As we are very much a working board, we do require that candidates reside in Eastern Massachusetts.

A BIT ABOUT OUR CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Brianna Boggs has volunteered with EMA since the fall of 2003. An Ohio native raised in the world of opera (which is almost as interesting as the circus), she caravanned out to Boston and found a fabulous fundraising job at GLAD. When not busy connecting rights to resources, Brianna enjoys knitting and other crafts.

Laurie Gutierrez has enjoyed many roles within EMA since 2000 and has served on the board since 2002, with a break to get her MSW at Smith. With experience in reproductive health care and policy organizations, Laurie loves EMA because of its community - the direct contact helping women, the volunteers, and the incredible support of the donors. She also currently works as a home-based clinician with Wayside Youth and Family Support Network and a counselor at Women's Health Services.

Jen Levine-Fried first started volunteering with the EMA Fund in November 2001. She is a proud Wesleyan grad, a die-hard Buffalo Bills fan, and the mama of a stunningly cute 15-month-old.

Michelle Mason joined the EMA fund as a volunteer in 2003 when she was working at Planned Parenthood. She joined the EMA fund as a way to further help the women that she saw everyday in the clinic. While at Planned Parenthood she spoke to women who had to reschedule their appointments due to lack of money and Michelle wanted a way to help these women get the services they need without a financial barrier. In 2006 Michelle was asked to join the Board as the Clinic and Fund Liaison. Michelle works with area clinics and communicates with other area funds in order to assist women in need.

Erin Kate Ryan joins the board as the Fundraising Committee Chair. She has been volunteering for EMA since September of 2006. A recovering attorney, Erin has a keen sense of color, a no-fail recipe for sweet potato polenta, and a brand new job at The Center for Teen Empowerment in Boston's South End.



P.O. Box 390412
Cambridge, MA 02139