

After touring the Sacramento Life Center on February 9th, we asked the staff to describe their patients' experiences and how the Center is serving the community.

If you have questions or would like to go on a tour of a local pregnancy center, please contact our Caring for America Chairs: Olga Hermann (916) 452-1156 or Amy Scherschligt (916) 905-0649.

## **The Impact of Pregnancy Centers on Their Communities**

*The Sacramento Life Center, Sacramento*

February 10, 2023

Pregnancy Centers have experienced some difficulties since the passing of the Dobbs decision. Though it was a huge win for the Pro-Life movement, centers were caught in the crossfire of this important movement. Many suffered vandalism, and threats to their buildings but through it all, the Sacramento Life Center, (SLC), kept their doors open to attend to their clients. While rallies of victory were portrayed all over the news and social media, they remained working steadily with clients, who sought answers and support to help guide them through an unplanned or unsupported pregnancy.

The national situation on abortion does not concern most of the SLC's clients. When calling to make an appointment, patients are informed that abortions are not provided at the Sacramento Life Center. Yet many women in Sacramento still prefer to come to the center to find out if they are pregnant. They come knowing they will find a professional and reliable clinic where they will be met with kindness and respect; allowing them time to think and talk about how they want to face their pregnancy.

Many patients claimed that an abortion clinic won't engage them in a conversation in order to make an informed decision or to consider the possibilities that would help them choose to have their child.

Patients, who have come to the SLC for an Abortion Pill Reversal, (APR), revealed that they felt rushed into an immediate decision by the abortion clinics, making them feel that there was no other option.

At the SLC, a patient is met with respect by a patient advocate, who will sit and listen to a patient about their needs and concerns. A registered nurse administers a clinical grade urine pregnancy test to find out if a patient is pregnant. A Registered Diagnostic Medical Sonographer will perform a limited ultrasound confirming the viability and dating of the pregnancy, and a licensed OBGYN signs off on all ultrasounds. All services are administered only with permission from the patient.

A registered nurse will follow up with the patient after the ultrasound and inform her of the date of her pregnancy. She is informed of all her options, such as parenting, adoption and abortion. She is given accurate medical information about her pregnancy and abortion procedures at her stage of pregnancy. The patient is free to ask questions, talk over mental and physical health, discuss concerns, fears, and other worries she may be experiencing, such as housing and relationship issues. Patients are referred to ongoing prenatal care and given the resources they need.

With the help of over 27 organizational partners, such as Sacramento Covered, Dignity Health, Sacramento Food Bank, WellSpace Health, Capital OBGYN, United Medical Institute, Nurse Family Partnership, Women's Empowerment and Adoption Network, to name a few; the SLC works together to meet the needs of their clients. In addition, SLC added an educational scholarship for women to continue their education and a benevolent fund for families in need. The Sacramento Life Center works to empower and improve the current situation of women and families.

The mission of the Sacramento Life Center is to offer free pregnancy and related health services, along with community resources and referrals in a confidential and compassionate environment. Founded in 1972, they are committed to ensuring all women and teens, especially those who are pregnant and lacking support, have access to medical care and resources. The SLC serves everyone regardless of income, ethnicity, or religion. They do not request or require medical insurance, and all services are free.

Many in the Sacramento community have come to depend on the Sacramento Life Center as a local community clinic for women. Past patients often refer friends and colleagues, ensuring they will be met with quality care, kindness and respect. Patients come with different needs and concerns: Young married families sometimes find themselves in financial difficulties that prevent them from feeling they can provide and nurture a second or third child. Young single women, without an existent relationship with the father, seeking to understand how a child will change her life and how she can manage being a mother. There are also women, with supportive partners, and caring parents and friends, looking to make an informed decision for what's best for everyone. And mothers who have come to SLC to receive the free resources and support that the SLC offers.

As California lawmakers continue to wage war against Pregnancy Centers, it is more important than ever to be informed of the positive impact that Pregnancy Centers have on their communities. In California, Pregnancy Centers served nearly 94,000 people and provided over 15 million dollars of free services.

The low income rate for California is 23.4%, with Sacramento at 24.2%. On average, the Sacramento Life Center serves over 2,000 women and teens each year. In 2022, they saw 2,277 patients, 96% of the clients were of low income, 50% had no medical insurance and 24% were under the age of 24. The Sacramento Life Center works with families living in poverty or in crisis to receive free diapers and new clothing for their growing baby up to 24 months. When families receive free diapers, they're also receiving resources they need to help with other challenges, such as covering a utility bill, a mental health referral, access to health care, and essential baby items for their child. The SLC receives no government funding, they do not request or require medical insurance, they do not contribute to political campaigns or ballot initiatives and they serve everyone regardless of income, ethnicity, or religion and all services are free.

