

Women's Health: A New Perspective



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Service Site

Prince George's Reproductive Health Services
The Riggs Building (at University Blvd.)
7411 Riggs Road, Suite 300
Hyattsville, Maryland 20783
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Prince George's Reproductive Health Services (PGRS) is a women's health clinic that provides women of all ages with pregnancy terminations during their first and second trimesters. PGRS advocates that all women should have many options available to them when making the decision to terminate a pregnancy and that she has the right to make the decision that is best for her. PGRS both supports and respects the woman's decision and views it as the right one for her.

The goal is to provide this service in both a professional yet comfortable environment. Each patient is provided individual counseling and is walked through the process step by step.

Activities

I was responsible for...

- **Setting** up the lab station and maintaining it throughout the day.
- **Maintaining** the lab log with appropriate lot numbers and control tests.
- **Conducting** a urine pregnancy test for every patient before further lab work is done.
- **Drawing** blood samples from the patient to determine their RH factor and their hemoglobin level.
- **Applying** Anti-D to blood samples, resulting in agglutination (the formation of small granules) if the blood contains the RH factor. If the sample does not contain the RH factor, the blood will remain smooth.
- **Preparing** a Rhogam injection if the patient is RH negative (a half dose if the patient is less than thirteen weeks pregnant).
- **Drawing** up Depo-Provera injections for the doctor to administer.
- **Administering** oral medication to the patient including pre-medicate antibiotic therapy for patients with heart murmurs, a history of rheumatic fever, congenital heart lesions, and open heart surgery.
- **Labeling**, completing the paperwork for, and shipping all Uterine POCs and Pap Smears.
- **Washing** and sterilizing all surgical trays, dilators, curettes, ringed forceps, speculums, and needle extenders

Issues Facing PGRS

There have been countless cases where people have resorted to unsafe measures in order to terminate an unplanned pregnancy. The goal of PGRS is to provide two safe methods for termination (an oral pill and a surgical procedure) that do not endanger the health of the patient. The main issue that PGRS currently faces in performing this service is that it's understaffed. An increase in the number of staff members works to increase productivity and overall safety.

My Personal Impact

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work alongside the medical professionals at Prince George's Reproductive Health Services this past winter.

“When you start work at the clinic, you’ll understand why we’re so busy” – Wendy Goldstein

I feel that providing my services to a sometimes understaffed facility made more of an impact than anything else I did. When the clinic got busy, the staff tended to focus their attention directly on what they were doing and they became less attentive to every patient's individual needs. My work at the clinic took a great deal of stress off of everybody else and allowed them to give the patients more individual care. My service made it easier for the doctor on staff and the other medical professionals to do their own jobs well, resulting in the completion of more safe procedures.

Even though the clinic tried to provide a comfortable atmosphere for the patients, the waiting room was almost always overcrowded, the patients were nervous and scared, and the staff was concentrating on their work to prevent careless mistakes. When this happens, bedside manner decreases and patients' anxiety increases which can cause problems. I saw this as a chance to make a difference. I used my time at the clinic as an opportunity to make an uncomfortable situation more bearable for the patients by being receptive to their emotions and concerns. This, in turn, created a more comfortable and safer atmosphere.

Along with the service that I provided, through this experience I was able to see in great detail how an OB/GYN practice functions. This was my first time working in a medical facility and working with patients. As a result, I have gained invaluable patient care skills that will benefit me later in life.

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Most people have very strong opinions about abortion, and when I arrived at the clinic, so did I. Whether or not I thought it was the right choice to begin with, I have learned so much by watching patients as they go through that process. The line between right and wrong has become hazy and I have learned the important lesson of impartiality. Every woman has her own reason for making this choice and it is not my place as a medical professional to validate that reason. History has shown that some women will seek out dangerous methods to terminate a pregnancy when there aren't safe methods available to them -- I am glad that a place exists where women can safely undergo this procedure without fear of injury.

Since the need for such a facility continues to grow, PGRS will continue to provide its services to all women who choose to seek them out. The service that I provided assisted in the continuance of the practice; I am continuing my work there, seeing as my help is still needed and the experience gained in a medical facility is priceless.

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