

Beginning Planned Parenthood Internship During COVID-19 and George Floyd

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I have begun my summer internship for Planned Parenthood North Central States at possibly one of the most chaotic times that the Twin Cities community has seen in a long time. When my internship with Planned Parenthood in St. Paul was moved online due to COVID-19, I was just grateful that it was not canceled and I would still

have something to do and a way to contribute to a valuable organization, but I would not have expected it to be even more so interrupted when an important civil rights fight overwhelmed my community, along with threats of danger leading to concerns about the safety of Planned Parenthood clinics, offices, staff, and patients. When looking at maps of the areas affected by looting, destruction, and fires, both the St Paul and Minneapolis Planned Parenthood locations are in the middle of those areas. Instead of starting officially this week with the rest of my cohort, we all will wait until at least next week, because not only did resources and time need to be dedicated to securing clinics, but it is also important to let staff and the general community take their time to heal and fight against the racism of the Minneapolis Police Department following the murder of George Floyd. Issues of reproductive healthcare are so tied to intersectionality and issues of racial justice and true reproductive justice and access are not possible without the achievement of racial justice. High mortality rates of black mothers and unequal access to healthcare are issues that only brush the surface between those connections. As much as this internship is about learning and working for Planned Parenthood, the past couple weeks have also turned into me educating myself as a person with privilege about the plights faced by black communities, especially as it relates to reproductive justice. Healthcare is just as much an issue of reproductive justice as police brutality, poverty, and mass incarceration are issues of reproductive justice. As an intern, I definitely admire the way Planned Parenthood is letting issues of racial justice come to the forefront. Much of the work I am doing is still preparing for the 2020 election locally and analyzing and contacting candidates to identify those who will best represent and advocate for Planned Parenthood in the state legislature, but that work is still important to establish a blue, pro-choice Minnesota government that will also stand for racial justice as we move forward.