



Ally Newsletter

Spring 2010

In This Issue

- Queer Women Need Paps too!
- Pride

www.serc.mb.ca

Contact Us

brandon@serc.mb.ca

727-0417 (office)

729-8364 (fax)

Time is a great teacher, but
unfortunately it kills all its
pupils ... - Louis Hector
Berlioz

QUEER WOMEN NEED PAPS TOO!

Article sourced from www.xtra.com

To get my first pap test, I had to pretend I was sleeping with men. Several years ago, I was leaving the country and wanted to make sure I was up to date with routine health care. My GP said that it wasn't within "the guidelines" to give paps to women who sleep exclusively with women.

From my own research, I was pretty sure she was wrong. I also knew that I wouldn't have time to get an appointment somewhere else. So I lied. She told me if I wasn't interested in following her advice, I should get another doctor. After a supremely awkward pelvic exam, I left and never went back. Apparently, I'm not alone.

Pap tests look for abnormal changes in the cervix that could lead to cervical cancer, and they save lives. Two new campaigns are bringing this info to queer folks in Toronto. The first, from the Queer Women's Health Initiative, a partnership between Planned Parenthood Toronto (PPT), the Sherbourne Health Centre, Women's College Hospital and Rainbow Health Ontario, is called Check It Out.

Along with posters and flyers featuring local models, the campaign, launched in November, has a slick online home at check-it-out.ca.

"In the medical community, as well as among women themselves, the message is out there that if you're not having heterosexual sex, then you don't need a pap test," says Sarah Hobbs, executive director of PPT.

But that is way off. The government's Ontario Cervical Screening Program guidelines say clearly that women who sleep with women need regular screening. And while the guidelines are not explicitly trans inclusive, trans men also need pap tests.

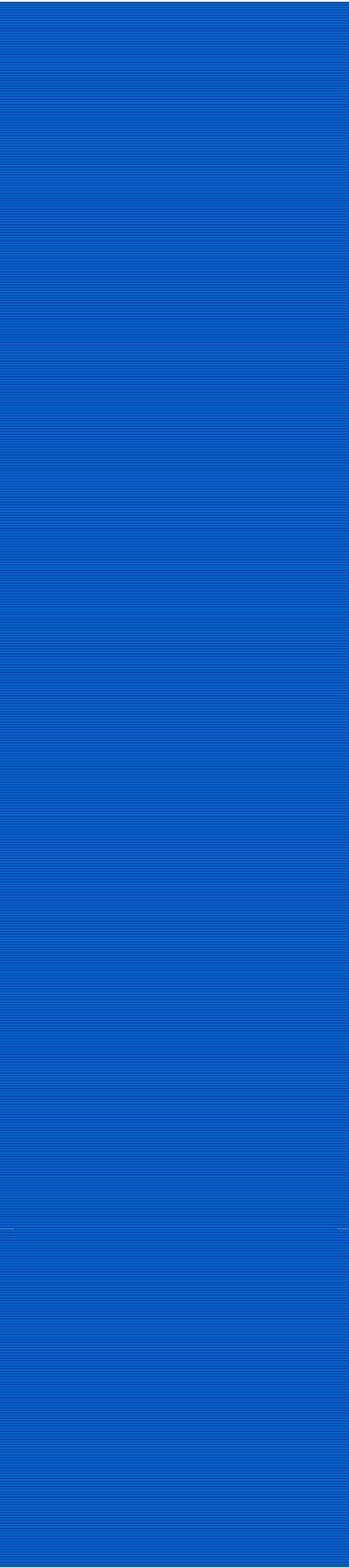
That's why on Jan 11, the Sherbourne Health Centre will launch a separate campaign for trans men, Check It Out Guys.

"Anybody who has a cervix, who has been sexually active in their lives, any kind of sex, needs to get regular paps," says Ayden Scheim, coordinator of the trans men's pap campaign. "Guys who've had hysterectomies, if they still have their cervixes, they need paps like anybody else. If people have had their cervixes removed, they sometimes still need to have something similar to a pap [that] tests for cell changes caused by HPV."

Both campaigns will reach out to service providers but also empower queer and trans folk to negotiate their own care.

Check It Out Guys launches Jan 11, 7- 9pm at Buddies in Toronto.

For more information, go to check-it-out.ca. A similar site for trans guys, checkitoutguys.ca, is scheduled to go live on Jan 11.



Pride Plans for 2010 are well under way and events will take place the weekend of June 11th, 12th, 13th. Call SERC @ 727-0417 for more details.