

VAGINA DIALOGUES



END OF YEAR REPORT (2022-2023)

THE ISSUE

- Many individuals are unsure of where their rights stand because of the political climate surrounding reproductive rights, not only in the United States but internationally. Since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, many states have rapidly started limiting or completely removing access to contraception and abortion services.
- After speaking with fellow classmates we found that most, if not all, did not receive comprehensive sex education in high school and were unaware of reproductive resources available on DU's campus through the Health and Counseling Center. Upon further research, we found the HCC website difficult to navigate and understand.
- The website did not offer a concise list and/or description of each service. There was also no price sheet available for contraception resources (such as an IUD); which was troubling considering the role finances have in whether or not an individual seeks out healthcare.
- Additionally, the website used non-inclusive language listing reproductive services as only "Women's Health," which can be isolating for other gender identities who are seeking reproductive services.

Women's Health

The DU Health & Counseling Center is a full service primary care and gynecology facility offering supportive, confidential, and non-judgmental health care for women.

Our services include:

- Emergency contraception on-site
- Gynecologic exams including Pap smears
- Pregnancy testing and consultation
- STI testing
- Contraceptive counseling

Overview

Urgent/After Hours Care

Psychiatric Treatment

Women's Health

LGBTQIA+ Health

Lab Tests

Immunization

Travel Health

Allergy injections

Supporting Statistics

80 %

of adolescents aged 15-19 had received formal instruction about STDs, HIV, and AIDS or how to say no to sex.

100 %

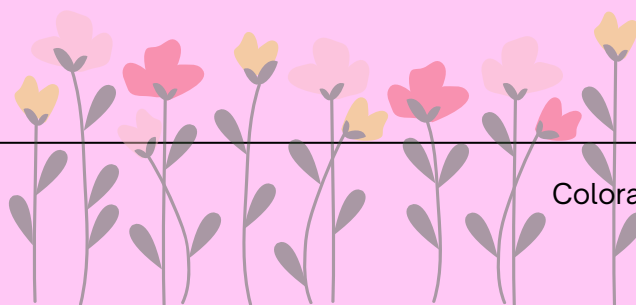
of alumni and students at DU that we interviewed said they either don't know a lot about the school's sexual health resources or they don't think it offers enough resources.

19,266,330

Women in need live in contraceptive deserts.

32

of all 50 states require sex education.

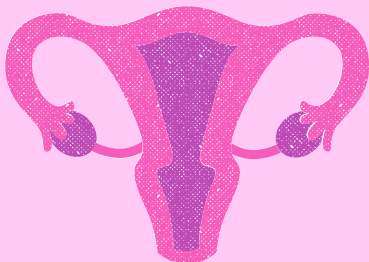


MISSION STATEMENT

Create awareness about contraception methods, services, and reproductive health resources while building community and creating space for vulnerable conversations. We aim to include the broader Denver community and collaborate with organizations to uplift marginalized voices within this initiative.

Timeline

Fall	Conducted interviews	Narrowed our focus	Researched issue at hand
Winter	Navigating conversations	Planning & Organizing Vagina Dialogues	Tabled at Sex Health week with Thrive
Spring	Creating Petition	Consent Fair Tabling	Peer Educator Slide Review



"I went into medicine and created Pandiahealth.com to make women's lives better."

- Dr. Sophia Yen, CEO of Pandia Health

LETTER

To whom it may concern,

We are three scholars part of the Colorado Women's College Leadership Program at the University of Denver. We are pleased to present that during this 2022-2023 academic year, we have developed our PICS project: Vagina Dialogues.

The issues of reproductive rights, health, and justice are some of the most pressing in our society today. Many lack access to contraception and resources in the political and social atmosphere surrounding reproductive health. Because we are often denied bodily autonomy within the US, it was important to our team to design our PICS project around access to sexual health resources and education at the University of Denver, a college campus community where many struggle to navigate the Health and Counseling Center (HCC) services. We also wanted to focus on this population because college-aged students are at increased risk of having negative sexual health outcomes. Therefore, ensuring that they have the resources and education available to them to make informed decisions was important to us.

As firm believers in bodily integrity, our group has sought to create accessible resources for students, create welcoming safe spaces to have conversations about sex, as well as working to implement systemic changes to our university by changing the HCC website through petitioning and modifying the curriculum used to train peer health educators at DU. Our project accomplished this by collaborating with a variety of different community organizations both on and off campus, tabling at sex and consent fairs, creating a fun and inclusive event (Vagina Dialogues), and working with our student government.

Our project fits the exemplary expectations and outcomes of a PICS project because we identified a need within a community and worked in collaboration with organizations to create meaningful and long-lasting change. Through this project, we were able to apply the theory and knowledge we learned in class to real-life situations. It has shown us the potential of our leadership minors that we have earned as CWC scholars, as well as the power we each hold to impact the world in a positive way.

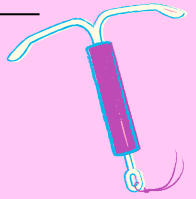
Thank you for taking the time to read about our project. We hope we have gained your support in our work.

Sincerely,

Nicollette Tanino-Springsteen, Melanie Torres-Godoy, & Vanessa Leon-Gamez

Colorado Women's College

STAKEHOLDERS



Thrive Health Promotion is a division of the DU Health & Counseling Center which focuses on providing the DU community with opportunities to learn, connect, and engage through education in issues of health and well-being. We specifically collaborated with the program coordinator, Leah Arvantis, who helps run the education programs and event for students across campus



Pandia Health is an online birth control and is one of the only women-owned/founded in the US. We collaborated with the CEO, Dr. Sophia Yen, in order to get insights on sex education, provide an online contraception resource on campus, as well as have a medical perspective to answer student questions.



Planned Parenthood ensures that everyone has access to the resources they need to make informed decisions about their bodies, their lives, and their futures. They provide essential health care such as: birth control, STD tests, pelvic exams, cancer screenings, and pregnancy-related services.



Elephant Circle is a national organization that integrates intersectionality and feminism to take a unique approach on reproductive and birth justice. They provide various services including community organizing, doula services, legal services, fiscal sponsorship, and more.

CAPE

DUs Center for Advocacy Prevention and Empowerment focuses on provided students at DU with gender-based violence resources as well as educating the DU community on these issues

COLORADO
WOMEN'S
COLLEGE



BUDGET

Overall Budget

\$450.00

CWC

\$250.00

Pandia Health

\$200.00

Expenses

Tabling Cookies	\$20.00
Prizes	\$150.00
Catering	\$198.00
Decorations	\$20.00

**BUDGET
SUMMARY**

\$388.00

Total Used

RESULTS AND SUSTAINABILITY



- We met our goal of receiving over 75 signatures and sent the petition to our undergraduate student government. Working on changing the website is a way to promote sustainable long-term change for students on campus.
- We edited the peer education sex training slides, which will be used to train certified peer educators at DU in the future
- Created a fun and safe event for students to talk about their sexual health and ask questions which is one of the first student-led events of its kind.
- Tabled at several events to connect with students and receive feedback directly from our target community
- We have motivated and overcome challenges and uncomfortable conversations
- Received additional funding through Pandia Health, which allowed us to get more resources for our event, and we were able to collaborate with several other community organizations



PEER EDUCATOR TRAINING

For the next part of our project, we sat down with Leah Arvanitis, the Coordinator for Health Promotion, Gender Violence & Sexual Health, to improve the Peer Educator training slides intended for sexual education. In this first draft, we found some issues:

- Not age appropriate for college students.
- Too concise and undetailed for training.
- Included gendered language.
- Did not include conversations surrounding sex and gender.

Working together, we came up with a more detailed list of topics to include in the training, as well as changing graphics within the slides. This included adding a section on gender and sexuality, services offered at the HCC, conversations about consent and boundaries, as well as sexual violence prevention.

Peer educators hold a lot of power as they directly interact and educate students. Therefore making sure they have adequate training to do this kind of work is crucial.

<i>Before</i>	 <i>After</i>
• Icebreaker • Contraception • STIs and STI Testing • Communication and Boundaries • Sex Myths and Facts • Q&A	• Icebreaker • Building an Inclusive Framework • Expanding our Understanding of Sex ◦ How do you define sex? ◦ What is sex for? • Sexual Health Services on Campus ◦ Health Promotion • Barrier Methods of Protection • STI Testing ◦ The Health and Counseling Center ◦ Price Sheet Overview • Communication, Boundaries, and Consent • Sexual Violence Prevention

PETITION

We decided to start a petition to hand off to USG advocating for changes to be made within the HCC. Within these demands were inclusive language, transparency, and price sheets. With these changes implemented, students will be more willing to seek out the services they need. We were able to receive all 75 signatures necessary through tabling and speaking with peers. We have sent the petition to USG to be defended and hope to see some of these changes implemented next year!

PETITION FOR BETTER TRANSPARENCY AT THE HEALTH AND COUNSELING CENTER

WE WANT:

- Price sheets and resources that are easily accessible to all students
- A well-informed and comprehensive section for reproductive health rights
 - Includes all contraception methods offered by the HCC with an explanation of what they are, side effects, and estimated costs
- Transparency on the DU Health Insurance (SHIP) and what services it does and doesn't cover
- Changing the name from Women's Health to Reproductive Health

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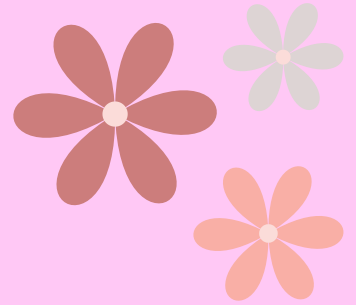


CHALLENGES

- During our interview process we had an uncomfortable conversation with a doctor from the Health and Counseling Center. We had originally wanted to partner with the HCC as they directly provide resources to students on the campus, however, we realized that they were contributing to the issue. Because they didn't share the same values, we instead took a different route and decided to focus on students and other community organizations.
- Another barrier we encountered was that we initially wanted to do sex education training on a social justice Living and Learning community as part of our sustainable goal. However, this plan fell through as the floor did not end up being developed.
- On the other hand, we also experienced personal challenges. Because we are college students and have very busy schedules, it was also difficult to find meeting times that worked for all of us where we could discuss plans and complete assignments.



QUOTES



"It's nobody's reason than your own when it comes to your body" -Selene Figueroa

"I have never learned so much about my body until the Vagina Dialogues event. It was so nice to be part of an environment where you could talk about your reproductive system without being judged." - Anonymous

"The event was wonderful and I learned a lot, I learned you don't need parental consent to go on birth control."
-Anonymous

WHAT WE LEARNED



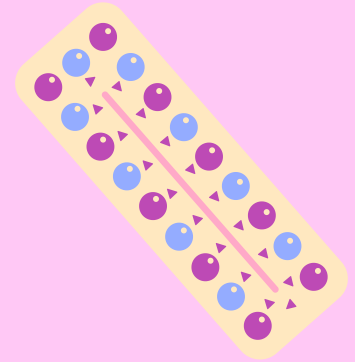
Vanessa: Growing up in a rural community has meant having less access to these kinds of resources, so this PICs project was more than simply a class requirement but something I am and will continue to be passionate about. I am proud of the work that we've done, the important conversations had with other DU students, and the important skills learned throughout the leadership minor that has allowed us to be this successful..

Nicollette: Though I have always been passionate about sexual health and education, it was treated as a taboo in my household and school. Doing this PICS project not only gave me the space to be more open and comfortable about these topics, but it has also extended that space to countless other students on our campus. The growth, skill, and personal fulfillment I have gained through this project are immense, and I will take that with me for the rest of my life.

Melanie: Sexual health and education had become a taboo topic both in my home and school life. This has always been an important topic to me, and this PICS Project has allowed me the chance to help tackle the issue as well as gain experience and learning. I'm excited to see how this effort continues at DU beyond just our work.



CONTACT INFORMATION



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