

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Becca Lee, Sr. Communications Manager

515.249.6084

Becca.Lee@ppheartland.org

January 4, 2019 (Des Moines, IA) – #SayAbortion, a campaign focused on breaking the cycle of silence and stigma around abortion care in Iowa, is appearing on billboards in major metropolitan areas across the state.

Planned Parenthood is launching the #SayAbortion campaign to capture and reflect the energy of Iowans speaking out against the state's dangerous, unconstitutional 6-week abortion ban that is currently blocked by a court injunction. #SayAbortion is rooted in the fundamental facts that access to safe, legal abortion care is central to reproductive health, and that bodily autonomy is critical to achieving full equality.

Statement from Dr. Jill Meadows, Medical Director for PPHeartland

"Planned Parenthood envisions a culture where abortion access is understood as a basic human right, an essential part of health care and a normal part of life. For some people, the decision to have an abortion is easy, and for others it is very difficult. At Planned Parenthood, we're here to provide nonjudgmental support and factual, medically accurate information so that every patient can make their own personal decision about a pregnancy based on their own values, desires and needs. Abortion is incredibly common, yet too often people who have abortions are made to feel like they can't talk about it, or when they do speak up their stories and voices drowned out by the politics. With the #SayAbortion campaign, we are putting a stop to the extreme anti-choice interest groups speaking over our patients. We are amplifying the voices of real people who have had abortions, we are talking about abortion care out loud, and we are shifting the narrative so all people can talk openly about abortion with sensitivity to the complexity of real-life individual experiences."

At the heart of #SayAbortion are the voices and faces of real, everyday Iowans who have had abortions. The series of billboards features faces of three women who are publicly speaking out about their experiences accessing this safe, legal – yet highly stigmatized – health procedure. The campaign includes empowering messages that proudly proclaim, "I had an abortion, and I am not ashamed"; "I had an abortion, and it was just health care"; and "I had an abortion, and I am not apologizing for it."

Statement from Leah Vanden Bosch

"I had an abortion 7 weeks into a pregnancy, just months before Gov. Kim Reynolds signed the 6-week abortion ban into law. I never intended to talk about my abortion publicly, but when I

realized how this law would have impacted my life and my health – including my mental health – I knew I could not stay silent. 1 in 4 women has had an abortion, or will have an abortion in her lifetime. I joined the #SayAbortion campaign because abortion is normal, abortion is health care, and I will not apologize for putting my life first.”

Statement from Rachel Goss

“I am an Iowan, a mom, a veteran and a health professional – and I’ve also had an abortion. I cannot imagine what my life would be if I had not been able to make that decision about my own health. That is why I have dedicated my career to ensuring Iowans have access to all their health care options – regarding pregnancy or any medical condition – and that is why I am sharing my personal abortion story through the #SayAbortion campaign. Abortion is health care; there is nothing else to it.”

Statement from Amanda Hammon

“I had an abortion at Planned Parenthood in Bettendorf, Iowa – a health center that politicians forced to close in December 2017. Since Planned Parenthood was forced out, women plain and simple don’t have anywhere to go for compassionate, nonjudgmental reproductive health care anywhere in the Quad Cities. It breaks my heart to this day that our community does not have access to abortion care or adequate family planning. That is why I am speaking up with the #SayAbortion campaign because I am not ashamed of my abortion, and I will never stop fighting to restore access to abortion care in my community.”

#SayAbortion billboards are currently posted in Des Moines at Fleur Dr. and Wakonda View, and SE 14th St. and Indianola Rd. Additional billboards will be posted this month in Ames, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs and Iowa City.

#SayAbortion also incorporates key elements of online storytelling and sharing of personal writings, videos, and factual information about abortion procedures – including Iowa’s telemedicine abortion program, which uses secure two-way video conferencing to expand access to abortion medications across the state. Stories, resources and information can be found at www.SayAbortion.org.