



NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS COLLABORATIVE

Partnering to Improve Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health

THE REALITY OF ADOLESCENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Youth in the 21st century face many types of health risks. Among the most serious challenges are pregnancy and HIV/AIDS, along with other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Communities around the nation are engaging youth in efforts to promote healthy behaviors. Accompanying these efforts, state government agencies are coming together to advance adolescent reproductive and sexual health with enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, and energy.



THE MISSION

The NSC develops state-level, inter-agency partnerships to improve adolescent reproductive and sexual health programs through shared visions and joint strategies. These dynamic partnerships, involving officials of departments of health and education, create and implement effective programs and policies to prevent HIV/AIDS, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unintended pregnancies among school-aged youth.



STATE SUCCESSES

SOUTH CAROLINA'S NSC TEAM collaborated, through the State Alliance for Adolescent Sexual Health (SAASH), to recommend revisions in certain health education standards for grades K-12. The State Board of Education accepted these recommendations. *These actions will help ensure that all South Carolina youth receive effective health education in schools.*

WASHINGTON STATE'S NSC TEAM contributed to enactment of the Healthy Youth Act, mandating that school-based sex education be medically accurate and follow K-12 Guidelines for Sexual Health Information and Disease Prevention, developed by the team. *This law will help ensure that youth in Washington State receive science-based sexuality education in schools.*

CALIFORNIA'S NSC TEAM created the Adolescent Sexual Health Work Group (ASHWG), a coalition of governmental and non-governmental organizations. ASHWG has developed core competencies for adolescent sexual and reproductive health professionals and produced integrated data reports that identify relevant trends, disparities, and needs. *These successes enhance planning and resource allocation and help improve youth-friendly services throughout California.*

CONNECTICUT'S NSC TEAM helped develop the *Tell Me What You See* program that integrates art work and poetry created by incarcerated youth into high school health education curricula on STDs, hepatitis, and HIV prevention. *This innovative educational program is a new and powerful tool for reaching young people in Connecticut.*



HOW IT WORKS

Each state team consists of departments of health and education officials in maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, STDs, and school health programs. The NSC provides team-building, skill-building, and ongoing support, enabling state teams to collaborate effectively to:

- secure funding
- prepare and implement inter-agency strategic plans
- engage youth
- build, create, and share resources
- revise and improve programs
- develop and implement policies
- integrate, assemble, and analyze data
- design and deliver professional development, and
- launch joint initiatives

THE VALUE OF COLLABORATION

Partnerships are essential to creating successful solutions to 21st century problems that cut across disciplines, institutions, and competencies. The NSC approach increases resources and expertise, leverages health and education investments, and identifies opportunities to improve program outcomes.

CROSSING THE AGENCY DIVIDE

The NSC convenes state public health and state education officials through National Stakeholders Meetings (NSMs). Through NSMs and ongoing follow-up, state teams develop joint initiatives, streamline and enhance existing programs, and create resources. This effort better equips officials to help youth make healthy sexual decisions and access high-quality information and resources. Additionally, states can apply lessons learned in other states to their own situations. Since its creation in 2003, the NSC has been a uniquely resilient force and a focused resource for 33 states.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS

Both health and education officials in states participating in the NSC support and promote science- and evidence-based programs to prevent teen pregnancy as well as evidence-based HIV/AIDS and STD prevention strategies and services.

INTEGRATED, COHESIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE

The NSC assists states in building integrated models for youth-based HIV, STD, and pregnancy prevention. This process helps state teams develop successful strategies and a cohesive infrastructure, working toward sustainability.



“The National Stakeholders Meetings demonstrated the importance of focusing on effectiveness and cooperation when crafting HIV, STD, and teen pregnancy prevention strategies, especially during challenging financial times. While our various adolescent sexual health programs have a long working relationship, the NSM process brought us together in a more intentional way to work on concrete projects affecting both programs and policy. Partnerships and collaboration were key to dealing with crisis and opportunity.”

— Kevin Cranston, MDiv

Director - Bureau of Infectious Disease Prevention, Response, and Services
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

“The National Stakeholders’ Meeting assisted Alaska’s team of state health and education agency staff in building relationships between the two departments. The collaboration continues to grow as new members of the two departments see the value of working jointly for the well-being of Alaskan students. The cross-department relationship has been very successful because there is a common goal of enhancing student health and safety.”

— Sophie Wenzel

Adolescent Health Program Manager, Division of Public Health
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

— Terri Campbell

Education Specialist, Teaching and Learning Support
Alaska Department of Education and Early Development

DID YOU KNOW THESE U.S. FACTS?

- ▶ In 2007, the U.S. teen birth rate increased for the second year in a row, after having risen for the first time in 15 years in 2006.¹
- ▶ Teen moms gave birth to more than 445,000 babies in 2007.²
- ▶ In 2006, more new HIV infections have occurred among youth 13–29 years old (34%) than among any other age group.³
- ▶ Nearly half of new STD infections occur in young people ages 15–24, although they represent only one-fourth of the sexually active population.⁴ In 2004, one in four teenage girls has an STD.⁵
- ▶ Twenty-two percent of 12th grade students in U.S. high schools have had four or more sex partners, and 46 percent of sexually active 12th grade students did not use a condom the last time they had sex.⁶

NOTES

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Births: Preliminary Data for 2007. National Vital Statistics Reports 2009; 57 (12). http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_12.pdf
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 CDC. Estimates of new HIV infections in the United States. CDC HIV/AIDS Facts. 2008.
- 4 Gavin, L. et al, Sexual and Reproductive Health of Persons Aged 10–24 Year—United States, 2002–2007. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), July 17, 2009 / 58(SS06);1–58.
- 5 2008 National STD Prevention Conference Oral Presentation. Prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections and Bacterial Vaginosis among Female Adolescents in the United States: Data from the National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey (NHANES) 2003–2004.
- 6 CDC. Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2007. *MMWR* 2008;57(SS-4).

This publication was supported by CDC Cooperative Agreements with the National Stakeholders Collaborative's organizations. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ▶ Has your state participated in a National Stakeholders Meeting? Are state experts in adolescent reproductive and sexual health collaborating?
- ▶ Are unintended pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and STD prevention programs in your state effective, efficient, and energetic? Are adolescent sexual health programs, policies, and practices based on evidence and data?
- ▶ What needs to be done to improve these programs and services in your state?

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