

# South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

## Lessons Learned

August 2012

### BE IN THE KNOW

Over the last decade, there have been substantial declines in teen birth rates in both South Carolina and across the nation. While teen birth rates among younger (15-17 years) youth have reached a record low, rates among older (18-19 years) youth remain much higher. In South Carolina, the rate of births among younger teens (15-17 years) was 20.9 per 1,000 females in 2010, a considerable 38% decrease from 33.6 births per 1,000 females in 2000.<sup>1</sup> The rate of births among older teens (18-19 years) was 75.1 per 1,000 females in 2010, a more modest 20% decrease from 94.1 births per 1,000 females in 2000.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, 71% of all teen births occurred among 18-19 year olds in 2010.<sup>1</sup> These developments were not surprising, considering that the majority of teen pregnancy prevention efforts have focused on populations of school-age youth. Only in the last few years have older (18-19 years) teens become a priority population.

#### ADDRESSING THE NEED

To focus on this emerging priority population, the South Carolina Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (SC Campaign) utilized the research, findings and recommendations from *Population Left Behind*<sup>2</sup> to develop an innovative pilot intervention with the goal of decreasing unplanned pregnancies among 18-19 year old youth in South Carolina by increasing access to contraception and information on sexual health. The intervention required local health clinics to partner with two or four year college campuses that did not provide reproductive health care services. Through these partnerships, the local health clinics promoted their services and provided information about sexual health on their local campuses. In turn, the SC

Campaign offered training and technical assistance to the clinics and partnering campuses to help reach these goals.

Often, health clinic staff asked the SC Campaign for a basic presentation about sexual health that they could use during their outreach visits to college campuses. The SC Campaign determined that many of the existing presentations were ineffective because they were “fear and shame” based with grotesque images of sexually transmitted infections (STIs); other options were too clinical, describing every symptom of every disease.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF BE IN THE KNOW

To address these concerns, the SC Campaign developed *Be In the Know* a presentation formatted for a one-hour class period that was tailored to address the sexual health needs of the students. *Be In the Know* offered basic information about preventing the transmission of STIs; addressed common myths about pregnancy prevention; and most importantly, provided students with information about accessing affordable sexual health services. *Be In the Know* provided fun and reflective activities aimed at driving students to the appropriate, local resources for additional information or health services. The presentation included three components: *Know the Facts*, *Know Your Plan*, and *Know Now*.

#### Know the Facts

This section provided an overview of STIs, identified symptoms associated with STIs, and presented effective methods of prevention.



## Know Your Plan

This section intended to get students to think about their individual plan to prevent pregnancy and provided an overview of contraception. This portion of the lesson used a short video, *Sex Myths*<sup>\*\*</sup>, developed by ETR Associates, to dispel common myths about avoiding pregnancy. *Know Your Plan* also used the *Birth Control IQ Quiz*<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, developed by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, to prompt self-reflection from students about their knowledge of contraceptive methods.

## Know Now

This section focused on promoting locations where teens could access affordable sexual health services in their communities. Also included in this segment was a short video designed by the SC Campaign to increase positive norms about using health services, condoms, and contraception.

The SC Campaign's *Carolina Teen Health* website ([www.carolinateenhealth.org](http://www.carolinateenhealth.org)) was integrated into *Be In the Know* and is also organized by the same headers (Know Now, etc). This resource highlighted additional information about STIs and pregnancy prevention and provided a teen friendly clinic locator and a contraceptive comparison tool.

Once *Be In the Know* was developed and piloted, the SC Campaign distributed the presentation and related materials to interested health clinics and colleges. Outreach workers from the health clinics were also provided with training on how to successfully use the presentation to increase knowledge about STIs and contraception and to draw students to their clinics.

## OUTCOMES

Since February 2011, *Be In the Know* has been implemented on seven college campuses with over 400 students. The presentation has had promising outcomes, with participants' retrospective evaluations showing the following results.

- 37% increase in knowledge of symptoms of sexually transmitted infections.
- 28% increase in knowledge of where to get information on effective methods of contraception and/or birth control.
- 30% increase in plans to go to a health clinic to access sexual health services and/or get information.

## WHAT COMES NEXT

The SC Campaign recognized that some individuals felt uncomfortable sharing *Be In the Know* because of the sensitive nature of the information. Often, instructors of the college 101-type classes were not well versed in sexual health information; and therefore, did not feel prepared to facilitate related classroom discussions. In response, the SC Campaign created a DVD version of *Be In the Know* that will be disseminated across the state and will provide an option for facilitators who feel uncertain about the material.

For more information about *Be In the Know* or to obtain a copy of the DVD version, please email [campaign@teenpregnancysc.org](mailto:campaign@teenpregnancysc.org).



<sup>1</sup>South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC). (2010). South Carolina Community Assessment Network, Birth Certificate Data. Retrieved March 2012 from <http://scangis.dhec.sc.gov/scan/bdp/tables/birthtable.aspx>

\*For copies of Population Left Behind, visit the SC Campaign website at [www.teenpregnancysc.org](http://www.teenpregnancysc.org)

\*\* For copies of Sex Myths, visit ETR Associates website at <http://pub.etr.org/productdetails.aspx?id=290000&itemno=S227>

\*\*\*For copies of the Birth Control IQ Quiz, visit the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy website at <http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/colleges/publications.aspx>

## FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT PROVIDED BY:

