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www.moappp.org Fall 2006

The mission of MOAPPP is to develop and strengthen policies and programs that promote adolescent sexual health, prevent adolescent pregnancy and support adolescent parents.

Racial Disparities in Adolescent Health to be the Key Focus of National Institute

Reprinted with permission from the CARTA Spotlight Summer Edition (2006)

While significant progress has been made to lower the rates of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents, ongoing data suggest that startling disparities persist between racial and ethnic groups. The question that many youth-service professionals continue to ask is, Why?

After several years of research, The Center for Applied Research and Technical Assistance (CARTA) Inc., a national nonprofit organization based in Baltimore Maryland, has developed a Structural Racism Framework to offer adolescent health providers a strategy to address this question. This framework will be the focal point of CARTA's 2006 Institute for Racial Disparities in Adolescent and Sexual Health. The 2006 Institute will serve as a preconference session at Healthy Teen Network's (HTN) National Conference in Anaheim, California this November.

CARTA's 2006 Institute reflects the organization's long-term efforts to create a national platform for engaging youth advocates in addressing structural racism, and the resulting racial disparities that exist in adolescent health and other segments of the youth development field. The event is the direct result of an emerging partnership between CARTA and HTN, a national, professional membership organization headed by Dr. Pat Paluzzi.

Building on the success of the 2005 Institute, the 2006 Institute will offer two new modules: a white privilege training and a structural racism assessment and response tool. Both were created in response to feedback

received from 2005 participants according to Kimberly Ross, research associate and training facilitator.

"Sometimes it's hard for whites to acknowledge the privileges that they receive in our current social system," she says, suggesting that this denial reinforces oppression. "To heal structural racism you have to bring out all the facets of its existence."

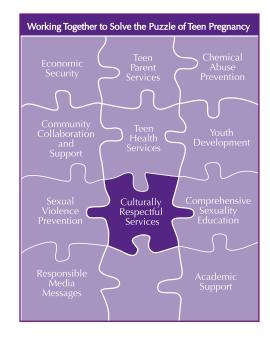
The core of the matter, says Ross, is helping youth service providers understand that the disparities created by structural racism exist everyday, in numerous settings for marginalized youth. "Many don't see how productivity can lag when you live in a society that doesn't acknowledge its own oppression," she says.

The assessment tool, which will be provided to 2006 participants, offers a tangible resource providers can take back to their agencies, initiate discussion, and take action by addressing disparities in their workplaces and communities. The tool examines this issue from two levels: the organizational level - allowing agencies to address such things as diversity, staff training, mission statement, and staff buy-in; and the community level - allowing an agency to critically examine its location and the people it serves (e.g., political climate and segregation).

The assessment uses a series of statements, which providers rate according to their agency's situation. Each answer is assigned a number that is added together to create a final score. Based on the score, CARTA provides ideas for creating more culturally competent environments and addressing racial disparities. CARTA hopes to tailor this training into an approach that can be applied to virtually any community, using a practical curriculum for youth and adults.

For more information, visit www.cartainc.org or contact Kimberly Ross: kross@cartainc.org. To register for HTN's national conference, visit: http://htnconfreg.org/default.aspx

About CARTA: CARTA is a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring the healthy development of all young people, specifically youth of color. They do this by building the capacity of the adults directly serving them and working to transform the systems and policies that impact the way that youth advocates work. www.cartainc.org



MOAPPP's Teen Pregnancy Puzzle illustrates the complexity of the issue and the need for comprehensive solutions based on research.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Dear Friends,



This issue of the MOAPPP Monitor focuses on culturally respectful services, a piece of the Teen Pregnancy Puzzle experiencing renewed interest, locally and nationally. As defined by the U.S. Office of Minority Health, culturally respectful services are respectful of and responsive to the health beliefs and practices, and cultural and linguistic needs of diverse (patient) populations.

Some researchers point to the lack of culturally respectful health and social services as partial explanation for the continued racial and ethnic disparities in teen pregnancies and teen births in the United States. Recognizing that the services we provide do not always meet youths' needs requires an individual - and organizational - willingness to examine our work. The Center for Applied Research and Technical Assistance (CARTA) Institute has developed an assessment and response tool organizations can use to do just that.

CARTA shares this tool to those who attend its training institute, described in the lead article. I had the opportunity to be part of the first offering of "At the Core of It All: Addressing Structural Racism and

Rethinking Cultural Competency in Adolescent Reproductive Health" last year, and can attest to its quality, and its ability to provoke thought and behavior change.

We also feature pieces on two local examples focused on the intersection of health disparities and culturally respectful services. Minnesota's Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative has targeted more than \$13 million in funding to local organizations and American Indian tribes over the last four years, including programs that offer adolescent reproductive health services. Additionally, updates from the Plain Talk, or Hablando Claro, initiatives in Saint Paul and Minneapolis highlight the need for accessible, youth-focused reproductive health services.

I encourage you to take time to read these articles, visit the web resources listed, and pursue some self-reflection about culturally respectful services.

Sincerely,

Brigid Riley
Executive Director

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The Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting, a non-profit organization, is composed of individuals and organizations that work to develop and strengthen policies and programs that promote adolescent sexual health, prevent adolescent pregnancy and support adolescent parents.

PUBLIC POLICY

The Role of Policy in Eliminating Health Disparities

In our society, public policy is created to address inequities of opportunity, access and outcome. How we construct policy reflects both how we perceive a problem, and what we think will resolve it. An example of a problem that demands a policy response is youth in the United States bear a disproportionate burden of negative sexual health outcomes. Almost half of the 19 million new STIs reported each year occur in young people aged 15-24 (Weinstock, 2004). When these numbers are further dissected, youth of color emerge as the group most adversely affected.



In response to Minnesota's racial and ethnic health disparities, the Legislature created the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative (EHDI) in 2001. The EHDI provides dedicated dollars to communitybased agencies and community health boards in the form of community and tribal health grants administered by the Minnesota Department of Health's Office of

Minority and Multicultural Health. Communities set their own priorities and strategies. Youth Development and Reduction of STIs and HIV are two of the nine priority areas on which the EHDI focuses. Many of the funded youth development programs work to prevent adolescent pregnancy.

Some of the programs funded by the EHDI focus on making health services more accessible and culturally relevant for young people. Culturally respectful services are programs that community members are involved in developing, and that reflect and respect the values and practices of the communities they serve. These programs are operationalizing the theories described in the lead article from the CARTA Institute about recognizing and addressing structural racism. Programs supported by the EHDI are leading the way in creating a new landscape for youth of color in Minnesota.

For more information on the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative, visit www.health.state.mn.us/ommh or call (651) 201-5813.

Youth in the United States

- Although teens and young adults represent only 25% of the sexually active population, 15 - 24 year-olds account for nearly half of all STI diagnoses each year (Weinstock, 2004).
- Half of new HIV infections occur among youth aged 15 - 24 (Cates, 2004).

Youth of Color in the United States

- Between 1991 and 2001, U.S. birth rates among 15 - 19 year old women declined in all racial/ethnic groups, although rates for black and Hispanic teens remain higher than rates for other groups (Hamilton, 2003 & Ventura, 2001).
- Through 2001, African Americans and Latinas accounted for 84% of cumulative AIDS cases among women ages 13 19 and 78% of cases among women ages 20 24. Through 2001, African Americans and Latinos accounted for 62% of cumulative AIDS cases among men ages 13 19 and 60% of cases among men ages 20 24 (HIV/AIDS, 2002).
- In 2001, the chlamydia rate among women ages 15 - 19 was nearly seven times higher among African Americans than among whites. Among males ages 15 - 19, chlamydia rates were 12 times higher among African Americans than among whites (CDC, 2002).
- In the same year, 75% of gonorrhea cases occurred among African Americans for whom the gonorrhea rate was 782 per 100,000 population, compared to 114 among Native Americans, 74 among Latinos, and 29 among non-Hispanic whites (CDC, 2002).

OUTREACH

Plain Talk: Communities Coming Together to Create Change

Kara Beckman, Plain Talk Coordinator, Neighborhood House Camille Thomas, Plain Talk Coordinator, Southside Community Health Services

Plain Talk is a neighborhood-based initiative, developed and aimed at helping adults, parents and community leaders develop the skills and tools they need to communicate effectively with young people about reducing adolescent sexual risk-taking. There are currently three replications of Plain Talk in Minnesota. Hablando Claro (Plain Talk in Spanish) has been in progress since spring of 2003 on the west side of St. Paul. We have completed a three year cycle and are currently collecting data regarding the impact and reach of the Hablando Claro process. During the Home Health Party phase of Plain Talk, our fabulous Promotoras, María Elena Escoto, María Salas, and Lucía Ramirez, brought the Hablando Claro messages to 400 community adults. The data that we collect will guide a strategic planning process in which we will determine next steps for creating sustainability of the project.

More recently, Neighborhood House began a new Plain Talk replication in the Payne-Phalen neighborhood under the coordination of staff member Selena Lee. We are working mostly with Hmong residents in this new process. Staff members from Saint Paul - Ramsey County Department of Public Health, Community of Peace Academy, Face to Face Health and



Counseling, Inc., Girl Scouts of St. Croix Valley, and MOAPPP have all been instrumental in effectively implementing our community mapping on the east side of St. Paul. During the month of July, community volunteers collected over 400 surveys from adult and teen residents. We are waiting for the results of the community mapping process and will be holding Walker and Talker trainings in mid to late September.

With the success of Plain Talk in Saint Paul as an example, Southside Community Health Services (SCHS) began their own chapter of Plain Talk in Minneapolis .The right pieces were in place and community members were ready to start their journey. The program is moving forward at a rapid pace. We celebrated the great success of the community mapping portion of the program with a "Mapper Wrap Up Party" that included food and prizes for the mappers. After we selected our new Walkers and Talkers for the next phase, we invited Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a national organization that is providing us with data

management and training support, to the survey result presentation and the Home Health Party training. The presentation and the training were a success; we had over 50 stakeholders from the City of Minneapolis offices, Hennepin County government, and the Bryant and Central community members in attendance.



Results of the mapping showed that 64% of the adolescents who were surveyed felt comfortable talking with their parents about sexual matters. However we know that feeling comfortable talking with their parents about these issues does not mean that they have communicated about these issues; this supports the importance of the Home Health Parties.

We are very excited about our newly trained Walkers and Talkers who will help to create a consensus between the adolescents and the adults in the Bryant and Central neighborhoods. The nine Walkers and Talkers went through an intense training with P/PV, learning about anatomy and reproductive health, communication, and the specifics of Home Health Parties. To further their expertise, SCHS will provide additional training that includes information about male and female reproductive health, birth control methods, STIs and HIV. Our Plain Talk team will be working diligently over the next few weeks, and plans to kick off our first Home Health Parties at the beginning of November.

For more information on Plain Talk, please visit http://www.plaintalk.org or contact Brigid Riley, Brigid@moappp.org, 651-644-1447 x11.

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SAVE THESE DATES

October is Let's Talk Month!

Let's Talk Month began as a local campaign in 1980 in Charlotte, North Carolina and is now observed in most states and in several other countries. Each year in October the campaign supports parents in making stronger connections with their children and to talk openly, honestly, and accurately about sexual health and relationships.

Let's Talk Month is an opportunity for community-based organizations, faith communities, schools, and the media to all work together to provide awareness, information, resources, and programming to encourage and support parents and other caregivers to make those important connections with their children around the topic of sexual health.

Advocates for Youth is the national sponsor of Let's Talk Month and has a campaign guidebook



(www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/ltm.pdf) and materials available to help you plan a way to participate in the campaign that fits your resources. MOAPPP is Minnesota's sponsor of Let's Talk Month. Visit our website for other ideas and resources to support your campaign participation, (www.moappp.org/outreach/lets_talk_month.html) and don't forget to let us know what your group is doing to support Let's Talk Month 2006! We will list it in Across the State on the Let's Talk Month section of the MOAPPP web site.

MOAPPP Training Event! Parent Child Connectedness: New Interventions to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

In recognition of Let's Talk Month, MOAPPP will host a one-day training offered on two dates by national trainers Lori Rolleri and Steve Bean of ETR Associates in Santa Cruz, California. Lori and Steve will lead local professionals in exploring the power of parents. This interactive workshop will define Parent-Child Connectedness (PCC), provide an overview of ETR's PCC project, review the factors that influence PCC, and discuss how PCC works as a protective factor with teens. A set of scientifically-based intervention activities designed to maintain and increase PCC in families will be presented.

October 11: The PREP Center - District 287, 1820 Xenium Lane North - Plymouth

October 12: Temple Israel, 2324 Emerson Avenue South - Minneapolis

Registration: Fee \$75.00 (includes lunch and materials)

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For more information or to register for this training event, go to www.moappp.org/outreach/events.html#newinterventions or contact Lisa Turnham at Lisat@moappp.org, 651-644-1447 x18.

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TEEN PARENTS

Reinvigorating the third "P" in MOAPPP

Since its inception, MOAPPP has worked to promote programs and policies that support adolescent parents and their children. This work has taken many forms, from state level advocacy to community coalition building to training opportunities for teen parent providers. As resources have shrunk, and state and Legislative commitments to this population have diminished, it became clear that MOAPPP needed to step up its efforts in this arena. Thanks to new funding from the F.R. Bigelow Foundation, Mardag Foundation, The Women's Club of Minneapolis, and Saint Paul Foundation, MOAPPP has set a clear vision and ambitious goals for this work. Our vision that adolescent parents experience long term self-sufficiency, parent their children effectively, and delay subsequent pregnancies; and that their children experience healthy growth and development and are prepared for school success, mirrors the vision of many others committed to improving the lives of adolescent parents and their children.



So what is MOAPPP's role in achieving this vision? The plan for the Adolescent Parent Network (APN) is steeped in research and based upon input from our members and other providers and experts in the field. It focuses on providers of adolescent parent programs, decision

makers that influence policy and funding priorities, and the broader community. It includes multiple outcomes, including the samples below:

- Increased knowledge, skills, commitment and confidence of MN practitioners to implement science-based approaches to support adolescent parents.
- Increased access to comprehensive services for adolescent parents including:
 - flexible, quality schooling;
 - case management and family support services;
 - prenatal care and reproductive health services;
 - parenting and life skills education and supportive services;
 - quality child care for children with links to basic preventive health care; and
 - father involvement services and supports.
- Use of common indicators of success across programs so that we can monitor statewide progress.
- Adoption and funding of policies and programs that support adolescent parents by MN decision makers.

To reach our outcomes, MOAPPP has identified a wide range of activities - some new, some improved and many that continue previous efforts. Sample activities include:

- Maintaining and expanding the adolescent parent resource directory.
- Creating an online APN discussion board to support collaboration and sharing of successful strategies.



- Providing training and networking opportunities for providers throughout the state.
- Identifying funding sources for adolescent parent programs and services.
- Collaborating with other organizations advocating for issues that affect adolescent parents.
- Encouraging APN members to communicate key issues to their local and state policy makers.
- Conducting outreach to the media to increase press around adolescent parent issues.

In the book, *You look too young to be a mom*¹, adolescent mothers were asked the following question, "If you could wave a magic wand and change one thing to improve the lives of young mothers, what would you do?" Their responses sum up the work ahead of us.

Imbue us with self confidence and strength.

...Respect and admire our strengths.

Offer limitless educational
opportunities and career mentoring
programs.

(Make sure) each young mother (has) a positive role model who can guide, influence, and encourage her in positive ways.

Add a mute button to babies so mothers still in school can get homework done. Show them that they can be everything they ever dreamed they could be.



We have a long way to go. We have an exciting plan in place. We will continue our work to make these dreams come true.

For more information about the MOAPPP Adolescent Parent Network, please contact Marilyn Colby Rivkin, 651-644-1447 x15 or visit the MOAPPP website www.moappp.org.

Citations:

1. Davis, Deborah, ed. (2004). You look too young to be a mom. New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

RESEARCH

Citations are included from this Monitor's articles.

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Villarruel, A.M., Jemmott, J.B. & Jemmott, L.S. (2006). A randomized controlled trial testing and HIV prevention intervention for latino youth. Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 160, 772-777.

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RESOURCES

Advocates for Youth - Cultural Competency and Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Project

Resources and publications to understand the impact of prejudice and discrimination on vulnerable adolescents and to emphasize youth empowerment and cultural competency when working with youth. www.advocatesforyouth.org/culturalcompetency.htm

Advocates for Youth- Youth of Color Initiative

This initiative provides strategic technical assistance via e-mail, telephone, mail, and face-to-face meetings. In addition, Advocates provides tailored training and workshops for youth serving professionals, youth peer educators, and young people. Seed grants are also available to help implement HIV/STI and teen pregnancy prevention projects. www.advocatesforyouth.org/yoc.htm

Center for Applied Research and Technical Assistance (CARTA) Culturally Based Parent and Family Engagement, What Providers Should Know, What Providers Can Do:

A Practical Guide to Culture and Parent/Family Engagement in Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health

This guide illustrates distinguishing cultural patterns within African American and Latino families and offers practical solutions for engaging parents/caregivers and families in activities and discussions that educate and inform young people on the realities of adolescent reproductive health and sexuality. www.cartainc.org

Child Welfare League of America-Cultural **Competence Division**

The Division is responsible for the development and implementation of cultural competence program principles, goals, operational objectives, and activities for CWLA staff and member agencies. www.cwla.org/programs/culturalcompetence

The National Center for Cultural Competence

The National Center for Cultural Competence seeks to address health disparity issues through training, technical assistance and consultation, networking, linkages and information exchange, and knowledge and product development and dissemination. www.georgetown.edu/research/gucdc/nccc

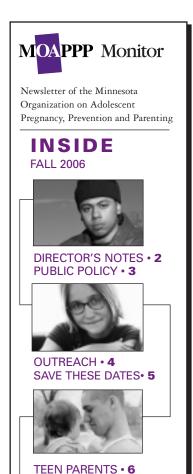
National Multicultural Institute

NMCI's mission is to work with individuals, organizations, and communities in creating a society that is strengthened and empowered by its diversity. www.nmci.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Minority Health

The Office of Minority Health has recommendations on national standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services in health care. www.omhrc.gov/CLAS





RESEARCH AND RESOURCES • 7

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If you participate in a charitable giving campaign at your workplace that operates in partnership with one of the following "charitable federations," you may designate all or part of your donation to a specific charity. Please consider designating MOAPPP this year!

- The Minnesota State Employees' Combined Charities Campaign
- United Way:
 Greater Twin Cities; Becker County; Carlton County;
 Caring Rivers; Crow Wing; Faribault; Hastings; Heart of the Lakes; Hibbing; Morrison County; New Ulm;
 Northeast Minnesota; Olmsted County; Red Wing;
 St. Croix
- Community Health Charities Minnesota
- Community Solutions Fund

Questions? Lisa@moappp.org or 651-644-1447 ext.16