



**TeenNow California
Virtual Focus Group**

September 27th, 2011

Hello, and welcome to TeenNow California's Virtual Focus group. We wanted to create an opportunity for our members and supporters, and anyone who cares about teen sexual health, to come together to talk about the state of our field today. It's critical in order to preserve what's left of our programs and services that we identify the challenges we're facing, and strategize about how we can best work together to ensure that despite budget cuts and program closures, we find some way of maintaining the progress we've made in reducing teen birth and STI rates. This event is for those of us still in the field, who will find it increasingly difficult to address this big issue with fewer programs and people, and for those who may have lost their jobs or programs, who want to find a way to remain involved and perhaps reinvent the system in their region to find another way to address adolescent sexual health. And, perhaps most importantly, we welcome anyone who is new to teen pregnancy/STI prevention and teen parent programs that are looking for an outlet for learning more about effective programming and resources.

As most of you know, we have taken a big hit in the world of adolescent sexual health over the last couple of years. We've lost the CCG programs, Cal-LEARN has been suspended, Cal-SAFE is in tier 3 flexibility and so is losing much needed resources and services, and STI/HIV prevention and treatment programs have sustained significant cuts. Much of what has made California a leader in teen sexual health has been taken away, but as long as we still have dedicated, passionate people to lead the way, I believe we can continue to build on our success—it will just have to be done in a different way. I'm hoping that today can be the start of a concerted effort to build a strategy that takes into account our current realities while remaining hopeful that we can serve all California teens in a way that will empower them to make healthy choices. By the end of this session, I hope to have identified at least three major priorities that we can start to pursue. On October 11th we'll convene again virtually to start to move a plan forward.

I'd like to introduce our panel of leaders next:

- a. **Marge Kleinsmith-Hildebrand, HIV Prevention and Sex Education Program, San Diego Unified School District**
- b. **Hector Sanchez-Flores, Director, California Fatherhood Initiative**
- c. **Sharla Smith, HIV/STD Prevention Education Consultant, California Dept. of Education**
- d. **Mitzi Inouye, Consultant, California Dept. of Education**
- e. **Lisa Duerr, Consultant, California Dept. of Education**
- f. **Sheoran Bhupendra, Deputy Director, ISIS**
- g. **Terrie Lind, Associate Vice President of Teen Programs, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte**

During this Q&A session, if you have questions for the panel, please press *6 on your phone. This will send me a message that you have a question and I'll un-mute you. You can also use the chat feature to either ask a question or to alert me to un-mute your phone. When the panel questions have been addressed I'll un-mute everyone and we'll have an open forum discussion.

DRAFT Questions for panel:

1. We've talked about how devastating the cuts have been to adolescent health. What, in your opinion, will be the fallout of this, other than the obvious expectation that teen birth and STI rates will rise?

MKS: Cuts in the budget for sex education are paralleling cuts in the districts—districts have relied on outside programs but now they're being cut too. It's a blow to the infrastructure and will hurt schools in the long run. Cuts are also affecting partnerships—will take longer to rebuild them and to share resources.

HSF: Programs were building capacity, and now other streams of funding are taking human capital—don't see people/experts coming back to the field.

LD: The Cal-SAFE program has taken 10 years to build up, and is now being dismantled. Districts have chosen to end programs, or are giving up pieces of programs, which is having an impact on students. Long-term and short-term impacts. Drop-out rates will rise, increased crime, incarceration, domestic violence mental health issues, students will not be able to raise babies. Also, the best and brightest won't be attracted to the field anymore.

SS: Loss of institutional knowledge—desperate times can create innovations. Now we really have to think creatively, and I think we're up for it. We can do it!

2. One of the side effects we're seeing immediately is the dissolution of collaboratives that have worked together for years. Now there are either not enough people left in a region to sustain a collaborative, or those who are left are less willing to work together because of the scarcity of resources. I really feel that we need to work together now more than ever. What are your thoughts on this, and what recommendations might you have for finding ways to work effectively together under these new circumstances?

TL: Many collaborative are saying "no, we HAVE to hang together", working together unofficially, have found out how to work together, new collaborative are stepping forward—school districts asking for help (seek \$ together, use services). Have commitment.

SS: Agrees, when times get tough it's the wrong time to let go of hands. Go to your community, needs/assets mapping. What's working? What are challenges? Who can help make this change?

MKS: ID common ground, sit down to compare needs. I collaborated with BFH to reframe what we were doing. Look at where the \$ is coming from; do what we were doing before, just tweaking it.

TL: Sell our services to constituents who weren't always supportive. You'll be surprised at who steps forward.

HSF: It takes \$ to sustain action. The Community remains in need of services. Engage new kinds of collaborative. Example: engaging with judges who see the impact on young people's lives. Bring TPP to new players that historically we didn't have to.

3. Who needs to be at the table now that the field as we know it has changed so drastically?
HSF: Continue to engage policy makers—they fund programs that have bad outcomes (ex. Juvenile justice system) but cut completely programs that work.

MKS: Work with people who have \$. Contact grantees right away to see if you can work together. Can they help me at all?

SS: It's time to think the most broadly about TPP. Beyond sex, etc., to involving the community, look at protective factors and partner with those people.

LD: We have to work with different cultures, different approaches needed for different populations. Involve local communities because they know about what is needed.

SB: Collaborate with research and academia. They have money and they will collaborate.

4. I want to talk about secondary prevention. I think this is a key element that we often lose sight of when we talk about teen pregnancy prevention, but really it should be a continuum of care. What are some ways you've seen primary and secondary prevention working together effectively, and how should we be incorporating secondary prevention into our thought processes to maximize impact?

SS: Concept of preconception care: how to take care of your body so that you can have a healthy pregnancy later. Start sharing common language. When times are tough you have to be willing to work on issues that may not be what you thought you would be.

TL: Who would argue with making young families self-sufficient?

5. We've already seen a lot of activity around incorporating technology into teen sexual health, in the form of using social media for outreach and* internet-based education as examples. How might technology be used in even more ways to help bridge the gap between the need that's out there and the reduced capacity we have to address it?

SS: Hookup and Today Is For Tomorrow. Get the word out. Can be used to make your case.

SB: technology is here to stay. That's what young groups are using to get info—have to have tech expertise or partner with someone who has it. Free resources you can refer teens to that already exist.

SS: text campaigns can be added to phone easily. Get adults working with kids to increase tech savvy.

MKS: Most schools block access to Facebook so some websites aren't available.

Via chat: You can request the school to provide access to a site for student outreach.

6. What can programs that have worked so hard on the issue of teen pregnancy do to create a louder voice on this issue and identify potential areas of existing funds for their TPP work?
Example Juvenile Justice funding for young men and women that reaches a high need group of young people.

LD: 15-20 parents going to a school board meeting, throw a little \$ at it.

HSF: Get voice unified message to amplify voice.

SS: State workers can amplify their voice by working with NGOs who can advocate more readily.
Fact sheets, talking points, using materials out there...

MS: Need to be clear that we're educated on data, that we're talking from a strong base.
Scientific studies, not coming from an emotional place.

DG: Also need the emotional angle to resonate.

TL: Have a strong social message. How do you turn your scientific data into an emotive plea?

7. As advocates for teen sexual health and support for teen parents, it's so important for us, and everyone on this call, to take efforts to perpetuate the gains that we've seen over the last decade and a half, but without adequate funding it's going to be hard. In your opinion, what are the three top priorities that we, as a group, need to focus on to make sure that teens get the best information and services there are, despite loss of all of these great programs? How do we regroup?

MKS: 1) ID existing resources 2) use of technology 3) collaborations

TL: Be open to seek out new and non-traditional partners

HSF: 1) remain vigilant on the kind of information that's being taught in schools 2) talk about how young people are part of the solution and engage them

SS: 1) be ever vigilant 2) continue to talk to each other, see how we are all contributing to our shared vision 3) dismantle and reassemble shared language 4) engage youth

Focus group questions

1. Please share your experiences from your region on program closures and the impact that they have made on your community.

Cindy Grossman: Cindy is the Director of SANDAPP, the agency that carries out the AFLP and (previously) Cal-Learn programs in San Diego County. She shared that they were seeing more

referrals earlier in the year than usual, and that the age of the girls being referred was younger than usual. So far, only a month or two into the school year, five of the many referrals she has gotten were for 14-year-olds. San Diego has the 2nd highest rate (behind Los Angeles) for pregnancies among younger girls, but what she is seeing is even worse than usual. She attributes the rise directly to cuts in teen pregnancy prevention programs at the middle school level.

Cindy also reported that many of her former Cal-Learn students were falling through the cracks under the Welfare to Work program. They weren't receiving the case management services that had been provided through cal-Learn, and this made it difficult for them to meet program requirements. Many were losing their child care and transportation, which makes it incredibly difficult for them to attend school.

Sharla Smith: Sharla reminded us that the PREP RFA, for money that the state DPHS won in 2010, is due to be released any day. While this money is a great deal less than the TPP funds we had before, it will at least go a small way toward filling programming gaps.

Hector Sanchez-Flores: Hector spoke about the work that the Fresno Regional Foundation is doing around teen pregnancy prevention. He reported that families in that region were enthusiastic about partnering with the Foundation and the agencies it's supporting.

Susie Bristow: Susie runs the Cal-SAFE program at Vista Unified School District. She said that she and other Cal-SAFE providers were really struggling with budget cuts. They are all looking for new ways to partner with other agencies and funding sources to get the help their students need.

Mitzi Inouye: Mitzi reiterated that although she is retiring, Lisa Duerr is still there and can provide support for Cal-SAFE programs. She encouraged all Cal-SAFE programs to continue to advocate and speak up to preserve or even bring back Cal-SAFE to their schools. She has seen two school districts decide that they needed to bring the cal-SAFE program back because of high student need.

Sharla reminded us that having teens speak at school board meetings or other venues is very powerful. She said that hearing youth voices is more compelling to decision-makers than hearing the people who work with them.

2. How have your coalitions and collaboratives been affected?

Charlene Clemens: Charlene is a private consultant working in advocacy around secondary prevention and teen parent support. She is also a subcontractor for TeenNow California. Charlene reported that in San Francisco, they're utilizing the pregnancy prevention workgroup. Through this group they're talking about issues that affect teen parents, and working with other groups like the juvenile justice system. Charlene also mentioned the Cal-SAFE Advisory Work Group, which provides advice and guidance to agencies conducting Cal-SAFE programs.

Stephanie Smith: Stephanie is the Director of Health Education at the Riverside Community Health Foundation. She is also a TeenNow California board member and Past President. She talked about how Riverside is continuing its coalition, although they have had to restructure to adapt to the budget landscape. They are reaching out to all youth-serving organizations to help meet the sexual health needs of teens, which means forming relationships with other groups

they may not have previously worked with. Stephanie recommended that programs continue to reach out to schools and try to help them meet their sex education needs, despite program closures, and try to find mutually beneficial relationships with them. She also stressed the need for reaching out to the faith-based community to seek funding and partnerships.

A caller from Chaffey Joint Unified School District said that their Cal-SAFE program had been terminated by district staff, but of course the pregnant and parenting students did not disappear. She said that these students are demanding services and that we all must work to make sure they get what they need.

Mitzi replied by saying that lower attendance among pregnant and parenting students, who now don't have the support they need to do well in school and take care of their babies, is costing the schools money in federal dollars. She recommended that everyone be as creative as possible to find extra money, and suggested looking into Title I funding for expectant and parenting teens, because that group has been identified by No Child Left Behind as one that needs supportive services and is eligible for funding.

3. How are you using technology in your programs, and what results have you seen?

Nicole: Nicole is a caller who works in Northern California. Her agency is using Facebook for teen outreach, and is having success with that. They also use Facebook to share updates on their teen mentoring program.

Sheoran Bhupendra: Sheoran reported that Alameda is using social media creatively. They have a Facebook page, a Twitter feed, and are connecting customers to the HookUp campaign via these methods and a radio PSA.

Dana Goodrow shared that tech companies in your area might provide grants for using technology creatively.