

PROJECT EMPOWER

Education Means Power



Buncombe County's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative



**A very special thank you
to Project EMPOWER's
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Buncombe County's Community
Health Advisory Committee,
and our community partnerships.

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National Youth HIV and AIDS Awareness Day

April 10th marks the first awareness day to recognize the specific impact of HIV/AIDS epidemic on young persons. A disproportionate number of new HIV infections occurs among youths. In the U.S., young persons ages 13-24 accounted for an estimated 26% of all new HIV infections in 2010.

Nearly 60% of new infections in youths occur in Blacks/African Americans, approximately 20% in Hispanics/Latinos, and approximately 20% in Whites. However, the percentage of youths tested for HIV is low compared with other age groups. Among the estimated 34% of U.S. high school students who are sexually active, only 22% have ever been tested for HIV.

Prevention Challenges

Low Perception of Risk: A majority of 15-24 year olds in the U.S. responding to a Kaiser Family Foundation survey said they were not concerned about becoming infected with HIV, which means they may not take measures to protect their health.

Declining Health Education: The prevalence of school programs about HIV infections or AIDS decreased from 92% in 1997 to 85% in 2013

Low Rates of Testing: It is estimated that in 2010, about 50% of youth aged 13-24 with HIV in the United States were unaware of their infection, compared to 14% overall.

Low Rates of Condom Use: In a 2013 survey in the U.S., of the 34% of high school students reporting sexual intercourse in the previous three months, 41% did not use a condom.



High Rates of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). Some of the highest STD rates in the U.S. are among youth aged 20-24, especially those of minority races and ethnicities. The presence of an STD greatly increases a person's likelihood of acquiring or transmitting HIV.

Older Partners: Young gay and bisexual men are more likely to choose older sex partners than those of their own age, and older partners are more likely to be infected with HIV.

Sexual Use: Nearly half (47%) of youth aged 12-20 reported current alcohol use in 2011, and 10% of youth aged 12-17 said they were current users of illicit drugs. Substance use has been linked to HIV infection because both casual and chronic substance abuse users are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors, such as sex without a condom, when they are under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

Homelessness: Runaways, homeless youth, and youth who have become dependent on drugs are at high risk for HIV infection if they exchange sex for drugs, money, or shelter.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

What You Can Do!

Refer Youth/Teens to the Project EMPOWER Program

Project EMPOWER (Education Means Power) is a Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, and a program of Mount Zion Community Development, Inc.

Since 2003, Project EMPOWER has incorporated bi-annual parental support groups at designated community centers, and at the MZCD office, to promote parental involvement, appreciation and ownership. Project EMPOWER specifically addresses the needs identified by the teens themselves, by the Project EMPOWER CAC, and by statistics.

Project EMPOWER programs provide factual information on STDs, contraceptive use, knowledge and skills to delay sexual initiation. The program also motivates teens to stay in school and succeed.

Project EMPOWER works with teens and the community to educate youth and foster their positive development by promoting healthy behavior, life skill opportunities and provid-

ing support services, empowering the teens to fulfill their sense of purpose in reaching their goals.

Project EMPOWER is effective at the provision of information and support to delay sexual initiation, improve contraceptive use (known protective factors), all leading to reducing adolescent pregnancy.

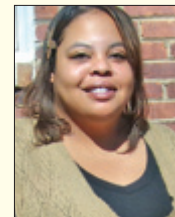
Project EMPOWER provides comprehensive sexuality education, and complete and medically accurate information about contraceptive methods, including abstinence, to all participants.

Project EMPOWER addresses all of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative components – academic assistance, parent involvement, career awareness, job skills development, individual counseling, cultural enrichment, and using known protective factors – to create a holistic approach for preventing first time teen pregnancy.

*Belinda K. Grant,
Executive Director
of Mount Zion
Community
Development, Inc.
Photo: Urban News*



A Message from Caryn B. Monroe



Caryn B.
Monroe

Fast Facts

Youth ages 13-24 accounted for an estimated 26% of all new HIV infections in the United States in 2010

Most new HIV infections among youth occur among gay and bisexual males; there was a 22% increase in estimated new infections in this group from 2008-2010

Over 50% of youth with HIV in the United States do not know they are infected

Source: Centers for Disease Control

April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Sexual violence is a very serious public health problem that affects millions of women and men. In the United States, 1 in 5 women and 1 in 59 men have been raped in their lifetime. (CDC)

If you or someone you know is in need of crisis assistance, please contact Our Voice at (828) 252-0562.

April is Sexually Transmitted Infection Month (STI)

Did You Know? Half of all sexually active young people in the United States will get an STD by the time they're 25 – and most won't know it. (CDC)

GYT: Get Yourself Tested!

Getting yourself tested for STDs or STIs is one of the most important things you can do to protect your health. Not only is it quick and simple, it's also usually confidential.

If you're not comfortable talking with your regular health care provider about STDs/STIs, please contact the Buncombe County Health & Human Services at (828) 250-5109.