



NATIONAL TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION PROGRAM UPDATE, 2015

Evelyn Kappeler, Director, OAH

May, 2015 – It is my pleasure to share a [Presidential Message](#) issued on the occasion of National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month 2015. In his message, President Obama shares the important reminder “...that we all share a responsibility to stay involved in the lives of our young people.”

2015 also marks the 5th anniversary of the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) and among its proudest achievements is its work to prevent teen pregnancy. Preventing pregnancies during the teen years allows young people to plan their futures and prepare to fulfill their potential as healthy adults.

OAH leads the national, evidence-based [Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program](#) which is one of several programs across the federal government that targets social and health issues that may interfere with a young person making a successful transition to healthy, productive adulthood. To learn more about what works to prevent teen pregnancy, OAH manages programs for teens in communities across the country that are testing new and innovative approaches; and implementing and evaluating [evidence-based programs](#).

The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program funds over 100 community-based organizations that serve more than 140,000 youth each year using a wide range of evidence-based and innovative approaches, in a variety of settings, and designed for diverse populations. OAH grantees are implementing teen pregnancy prevention programs that are medically accurate and age appropriate and in ways that actively engage the youth served. In addition, OAH Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs have trained more than 7,000 professionals and established more than 3,000 community partnerships. These activities are essential to building the workforce and increasing a community’s capacity to prevent teen pregnancy.

The OAH Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program includes an unprecedented investment in rigorous evaluation to expand knowledge of “what works”, and includes both grantee-level evaluations and federal evaluations. Currently, 34 [OAH grantees are conducting rigorous evaluations](#) using the highest quality research designs. In addition, OAH is conducting two national studies, one assessing the implementation and impact of innovative strategies and untested approaches for preventing teenage pregnancy; and the other examining whether three commonly used evidence-based program models will achieve impact with different populations and settings. OAH anticipates results from both grantee and federal evaluations will be available beginning Summer 2015 through early 2016. OAH has already begun, and will continue, facilitating publications of results from the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program.

In addition, to help expand the available information about evidence-based program costs, the Office of Adolescent Health is conducting a cost study of selected evidence-based programs looking at the drivers of program costs, as well as the variations in cost by geographic location and program setting.

The teen birth rate in the United States is now at a record low and everyone working to support adolescent health and reduce teen pregnancies is encouraged by this positive news, yet there is still a lot of hard work to do. The U.S. has one of the highest teen birth rates among industrialized countries. One in four teen girls will become pregnant before the age of 20, many communities in the U.S. continue to experience higher rates of teen births than others, and disparities continue to exist with African-American and Hispanic young women having teen birth rates about twice that of whites the same age.

The Office of Adolescent Health is proud to be a partner with other HHS agencies in a multi-pronged effort that seeks to reduce teen pregnancy by implementing evidence-based programs, testing new approaches, serving [disadvantaged youth](#), working with communities, and supporting access to [youth-friendly clinical services](#). Now is the time to accelerate the momentum we have seen by continuing to engage and equip families, schools, health care providers, and communities to better address teen pregnancy prevention.

During this 5th anniversary year and beyond, OAH will continue to learn more, to measure results as we implement programs, and to continue to expand knowledge of what works to support young people. National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month provides us with an opportunity to reflect on how we can keep working to help adolescents fulfill their potential by delaying pregnancy, completing their educations, and becoming healthy adults.