Teens and Providers Learn Communication Techniques

**The Challenge:** The Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health sought to lower rates of unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and health disparities among youth. Research has shown that one of the best ways to do this is to help teenagers and health care providers improve communication with each other.

**Project Goal:** The goal was to develop and evaluate workshops for teenagers and health care providers. Project planners trained 10 teen educators at a pilot site in Dane County to help lead the workshops throughout Wisconsin. The workshops targeted barriers to teenagers and health care providers communicating effectively with each other about sexual and reproductive health.

**Results:** Project planners hoped to conduct 20 workshops statewide, reaching 300 providers and 200 teens. They exceeded their goal – conducting 28 workshops for over 200 providers and nearly 400 teens.

Participants completed pre- and post-tests to assess their knowledge about sexual health issues. The tests showed considerable gains in knowledge, with scores ranging from 32 percent to 78 percent for teens and 20 percent to 77 percent for providers. All of the teen educators said that their knowledge about sexual health issues had increased and that they felt more confident talking with their health care providers.

Project planners also learned that teenagers find it difficult to talk with health care providers about suicide, depression, and drug and alcohol use. As a result, the Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health has transformed the program, now called PATCH (Providers and Teens Communicating for Health), to address other areas of sensitivity.

**Publications and Presentations:**


The highly successful workshops generated more requests than project planners had resources to conduct. However, the Alliance leveraged its work to secure funding to expand the program into Wood County, and it is seeking another grant for a site in Milwaukee. The Alliance also is seeking grants to support development of curricula, and PATCH is building relationships with health systems across Wisconsin.

**Grantee:** Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health, Amy Olejniczak

**Grant Title:** Wisconsin Adolescent Health Care Communication Program Evaluation

**Academic Partner:** Heather Royer, PhD, FNP-BC, UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing

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**Program:** Community-Academic Partnership Fund

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