

National Council of La Raza's Institute for Hispanic Health and The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

A Call to Action: Reducing Teen Pregnancy in the Latino Community

Leading Groups Unite on a Critical Issue

The nation's leading Latino-serving organizations are taking a stand to reduce teen pregnancy in the Latino community. Under the auspices of the National Council of La Raza's (NCLR) Institute for Hispanic Health (IHH) and The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (The National Campaign), 15 prominent organizations have developed a National Consensus Statement to serve as a catalyst for organizations, at all levels and in all sectors, to become actively involved in promoting and supporting Latino teen pregnancy prevention programs, policy, advocacy and research efforts. NCLR and The National Campaign strongly encourage groups to sign and support the consensus statement (included below) and commit to taking action.

Why Focus on Teen Pregnancy Prevention in the Latino Community?

The prevalence of teen pregnancy in the Latino¹ community has serious consequences, including poverty, lack of educational attainment and a lower chance of socioeconomic advancement.

- Fifty-two percent of Latina teens become pregnant at least once before age 20. Therefore, if you are a Latina, you are more likely than not to become pregnant as a teen.
- Latinas have the highest teen pregnancy and birth rates of any major ethnic group in the United States. The teen pregnancy rate for Latinas is nearly twice as high as the national average.
- The most recent national teen pregnancy data show that between 2005 and 2006, the Latina teen pregnancy rate increased for the first time since 1990.
- More than half (54%) of Latina teen moms drop out of high school (in comparison to 34% of teen moms overall).²

The organizations that have signed the consensus statement recognize that it is crucial for our nation's health and prosperity to invest in the success of our Latino youth, especially since Latinos are the fastest-growing group in the nation. At present, one in four children under the

¹ The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.

² Perper, K., Peterson, K., & Manlove, J., *Diploma Attainment Among Teen Mothers, 2010*. Child Trends, Fact Sheet. Washington, DC, 2010. http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2010_01_22_FS_DiplomaAttainment.pdf (accessed March, 2010).

age of five is Latino. By 2025, it is predicted that 25% of teens in the United States will be Latino.³

The National Consensus Statement on Teen Pregnancy Prevention in the Latino Community

The following consensus statement has been drafted based on the discussions and deliberations of the participants:

Teen pregnancy is an increasingly critical issue in the Latino community. One out of every two Latina teens (52%) will become pregnant at least once before the age of 20. Teen pregnancy not only makes it far more difficult for male and female youth to reach their educational, career, financial, and relationship goals, but it also has consequences for the advancement of Latino youth, families, and the Latino community as a whole. It is in all of our interests to help Latino teens delay pregnancy and family formation until they are further along in meeting their life aspirations. To help reduce teen pregnancy among Latino youth requires the following action steps:

1. Promoting policies and structural changes that remove barriers from, increase access to, and ultimately change the health, educational, and social systems into equitable and fair systems for Latino youth, their families, and their communities
2. Supporting Latino families and communities in creating an encouraging and safe environment that promotes and facilitates communication among Latino families and community members about teen pregnancy and overall sexual and reproductive health
3. Providing young men and women the tools and education, in culturally competent and linguistically appropriate ways, to help them make informed and healthy decisions to avoid risky sexual behaviors that lead to teen pregnancy, STIs, and HIV/AIDS
4. Enhancing sexual health education to include healthy relationships, the pursuit of education, the role of young men and women in preventing teen pregnancy, and a more complete understanding of the implications that teen pregnancy and childbearing have for young men and women, their families, and their communities.

³ U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Projections of the total resident population by 5-year age groups, race, and Hispanic origin with special age categories: Middle Series, 1999 to 2100*. Tables NP-T4. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/natsum-T3.html> (accessed September 8, 2005).

Signatories

National Consensus-Building Partners:

1. **The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy**
2. **National Council of La Raza, Institute for Hispanic Health**

National Organizations:

1. **Advocates for Youth**
2. **ASPIRA Association**
3. **ASPIRE, Inc.**
4. **Boys and Girls Club of America**
5. **Congressional Hispanic Leadership Institute**
6. **Esperanza USA**
7. **First Focus**
8. **Girls Inc.**
9. **Hispanic Heritage Foundation**
10. **Latino Public Radio**
11. **League of United Latin American Citizens**
12. **Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund**
13. **National Association of Community Health Centers, Inc.**
14. **National Association of Hispanic Nurses**
15. **National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry**
16. **National Compadres Network**
17. **National Hispana Leadership Institute**
18. **National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference**
19. **National Hispanic Medical Association**
20. **National Hispanic Professional Organization (NHPO)**

21. **National Latina Health Network**
22. **National Latino Children's Institute**
23. **National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute**
24. **National Women's Law Center**
25. **Planned Parenthood Federation of America**

Local/Regional Organizations: (*NCLR Affiliates)

1. **Alivio Medical Center***
2. **AltaMed Health Services Corporation - Youth Services***
3. **Cabot Westside Clinic***
4. **CASA of Maryland, Inc.***
5. **Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy (CHisPA)***
6. **Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe, Inc.***
7. **Community Bridges, Inc.**
8. **Comunidades Latinas Unidos en Servicios (CLUES)***
9. **Hispanas Organized for Political Equality**
10. **Hispanas Unidas**
11. **The Hispanic Health Council***
12. **La Clínica de La Raza***
13. **La Clínica del Pueblo, Inc.***
14. **La Fe Policy Research & Education Center***
15. **Latin American Community Center, Inc.***
16. **Latin American Youth Center***
17. **Make the Road New York***
18. **Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care***

19. **Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington, DC, Inc.**
20. **Planned Parenthood of Columbia Willamette, COO**
21. **San Ysidro Health Center, Inc.***

Individuals:

1. **Krystle Y. Dorsey**
2. **Daisy Expósito-Ulla**
3. **Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, Ph.D., LCSW**
4. **Michelle Minguez Moore**
5. **Gloria Rodriguez, Ph.D.**
6. **Héctor Sánchez-Flores**
7. **Carlos Ugarte, MSPH**
8. **Antonia M. Villarruel PhD, FAA**

Showing Us the Way: Examples of Action

In many ways the work has just begun, but our hope is that that the consensus-building process will raise the work of preventing teen pregnancy in the Hispanic community to prominent levels. There are groups across the country that are taking action and their work serves as an example of what others might do:

1. **Promoting a science-based approach to prevent teen pregnancy in your community.** A coalition of youth development agencies, medical service providers, and advocates in a Northeastern county, serving primarily Latino and African American youth, conducted a community needs assessment that included exploring the teen pregnancy disparities within the Latino community. This process helped community leaders advocate for a comprehensive, evidence- and science-based sex education program. Largely due to the coalition's advocacy, the public schools in the county voted for all seventh and ninth graders to be taught the new sex education program during the 2009–2010 school year.
2. **Incorporating a teen pregnancy prevention program into an existing program.** Most United Ways have programs that promote positive youth development, focusing on education, and building self-esteem. However, not all of them have specifically developed programs to prevent teen pregnancy. Several local United Ways have recognized the serious consequences of early pregnancy and parenthood for teen parents, their children, and their communities, and are leading efforts to reduce teen pregnancy. For example, some chapters are leading initiatives such as establishing a community-wide Teen Pregnancy Prevention Oversight Committee to work in collaboration with other local agencies and community leaders to reduce teen births by 46% by 2015, fund

school and after-school programs, raise community awareness of the problem, and compile and disseminate research on this topic.

3. Educating affiliates, chapters, members, or surrounding community about the issue.

A religious organization representing thousands of Hispanic evangelical churches disseminated information through e-newsletters about the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy in May to its millions of members, encouraging them to familiarize themselves with the issue and make sure they are taking action in their own communities to prevent teen pregnancy. They also posted the National Day Quiz in English and Spanish on their website, and incorporated the issue of preventing teen pregnancy in the Latino community as an organizational priority. The organization's board of directors voted to add the issue of reducing teen pregnancy into their strategy and began to advocate for the issue on Capitol Hill in 2009.

**Latino Teen Pregnancy Prevention Information and National Consensus Statement
Resources**

1. Visit www.thenationalcampaign.org/espanol/default_eng.aspx to find:
 - A summary of the main points discussed at the consensus-building meeting
 - More information on teen pregnancy prevention in the Latino community, including data, geographical information, causes, consequences, and potential solutions
2. Contact Ruthie Flores of The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy's Latino Initiative at (202) 478-8504 or rflores@thenc.org to:
 - Sign the consensus statement
 - Explore how your organization can incorporate teen pregnancy prevention into its work