



# Innovative Approaches to Addressing Reproductive Health Disparities Among Urban Youth: Promising Models from the Urban Initiative for Reproductive Health



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The goal of the groundbreaking **Urban Initiative for Reproductive Health** is to create and promote real policy solutions to address the reproductive health challenges facing cities today. The Urban Initiative brings together mayors, city legislative leaders, county executives, public health officials and advocates to advance an agenda promoting policies and programs that increase access to comprehensive reproductive health services, reduce unintended pregnancies, address reproductive health disparities, and lead to healthier birth outcomes. For more information on these and other Promising Models, visit [www.urbaninitiative.org](http://www.urbaninitiative.org) or contact [kbaden@nirhealth.org](mailto:kbaden@nirhealth.org).

## Promising Model: Seen on da Streets, Minneapolis

Seen on da Streets is an innovative, community-driven response to the disproportionately high rates of STDs and teen pregnancy in urban, low income communities. This project relies on the expertise of peer advocates who represent the communities they serve to deliver health education messages about sexual health and encourage connections to clinical services, with an emphasis on STD screening. A unique innovation of the project is the use of outreach-based urine specimen collection to remove barriers to health care. Once young men are screened in non-clinical settings, they are asked to make a clinic visit to receive their results.



## Promising Model: Don't Think Know, Los Angeles



In 2009, L.A. County began a Don't Think Know program to detect and treat Chlamydia and gonorrhea among young women through a free STD Home Test Kit. This first-in-the-nation large scale program seeks to disseminate critical sexual health education and information by connecting with young people where they are – online. The Don't Think Know Home Test Kit is specifically designed for women 25 years of age and younger. Young women can order a Home Test Kit online and take the test in private. Test kits are mailed shortly after an order is received; testing is done by the Public Health Laboratory, and results are available online or by phone one week later. A text message is then sent, reminding recipients that results are available online.

## Promising Model: School-Based STI Screening and Prevention, Chicago

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) in partnership with other community partners is completing a two-year pilot project that provides STI prevention and screening within the Chicago Public Schools high schools. The program consists of education and screening with students receiving a health education presentation by trained and certified staff and packets with detailed information including consent forms, specimen form, information on STIs, a urine specimen cup and a brown paper bag for the urine specimen. The program utilizes protocols to ensure each student's confidentiality, rights and responsibilities are respected and all fees are covered by CDPH. Students are instructed to call within 10 days to receive their results. Further counseling and services are provided as needed.

## Promising Model: School-Based Health Center Reproductive Health Project and the Healthy Teen Initiative, New York City

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Bureau of Maternal, Infant, and Reproductive Health and the Office of School Health have collaborated to implement the School-Based Health Center Reproductive Health Project to remove barriers to accessing hormonal and long-acting contraception (LARC) for NYC high school students. The project has increased the availability of sexual and reproductive health services to students at high schools with SBHCs by establishing systems to purchase and dispense contraceptive methods onsite at SBHC, provided training and education to providers on LARC as a safe and effective option for adolescents, and established LARC regional referral centers.



DOHMH is also working on the community level to improve the access to and quality of reproductive health services through the Healthy Teens Initiative. HTI partners with health centers serving neighborhoods with high teen pregnancy rates and offers training and technical assistance to promote access to a range of contraceptive methods for adolescents, including hormonal contraceptives and copper IUDs and use of the Quick Start method.