



South Carolina Access Initiative

The purpose of the South Carolina Access Initiative (SCAI) is to increase access and decrease barriers to reproductive information and health services for all residents of South Carolina. Using a multi-pronged and participatory approach we wish to foster broad-based and inclusive participation in a statewide reproductive health justice movement through research-based needs and strengths assessments, community engagement, outreach, education, and collaborative projects. Our goal is to expand access to quality comprehensive medically accurate and culturally appropriate reproductive health information and health services for communities across the state. We are particularly interested in reducing disparities in reproductive health. The state-specific projects are formulated through discussions with stakeholders, determining what gaps and needs are present, and how SCAI can interface with existing projects and institutions to extend or create new programs. Examples of our work include:

Technical Assistance to Social Service Providers:

- ❖ Providing reproductive health training workshops with community groups, including all three Healthy Start programs (Palmetto--Columbia, Pee Dee--Florence, Low County--Orangeburg) in the state.
- ❖ Fund, train and mentor Reproductive Health Team Leaders in Pee Dee, Low Country and Palmetto Healthy Starts.
- ❖ Collaborate with Low Country Healthy Start's Provider Network and Advocacy Planning Group.
- ❖ Providing reproductive health workshops and technical assistance to USC's *PASOS*, a perinatal support program for Latinas in the midlands, upstate and low country regions of SC.
- ❖ Providing workshops on the intersection of interpersonal violence and reproductive health in collaboration with South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA). First workshop December 14, 2010 attended by social workers and counselors across the state from many agencies (state and local DSS, Rape Crisis and Domestic Shelters, State Mental Health, Fort Jackson, SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, Richland One, USC, Clemson, Hope Health).
- ❖ Collaborating with DIVA (Dedicated Individually to Valiantly Assist), a program to empower largely African American at risk teens and young women in the midlands.

Technical Assistance for Medical/Nursing Education, Health Educators and Practitioners

- ❖ Provided technical assistance to write a grant for residency training of OB-GYNs in comprehensive reproductive health services at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) which was funded in July 2009.
- ❖ Provided support to the work of MUSC School of Nursing Office of Practice's *Portales de Salud* project that uses Promotores for outreach and education on reproductive needs of immigrant teens in the Charleston area.
- ❖ Provide workshops/presentations on reproductive issues for MUSC Medical and Nursing Students and Nursing Students at South University.
- ❖ Provide presentations on reproductive health for SC-DHEC Region 7 and 8 Public Health Nurses and School Health Educators, with training for more regions planned in 2011-12.

Research and Scholarly Dissemination

- ❖ Research to assess reproductive health needs of women using homeless and domestic violence shelter services, in collaboration with SCCADVASA.
- ❖ Grant writing with SCCADVASA, Greenville Hospital Systems.
- ❖ Presented *Unmet need for family planning in Region IV* at the Regional Network Data Management and Utilization workshop for Region IV September, 2009; presented a poster at the USC Women's Health Research Forum, October, 2009 and at Association of Reproductive Health Professionals in September, 2010.
- ❖ Unmet need for family planning in Region IV, abstract published in *Contraception*, 82 (2), 197.

- ❖ Presented *What a difference a day makes: The undue burden of the 24 hour waiting period* at APHA, November 2009.
- ❖ Invited speakers: *Seeing Through a New Lens to Reduce Health Disparities: Sticky Messages for Positive Encounters*, presented at Health Equity in the 21st Century: Saving the Next Generation, Healthy Start 8th Annual Cultural Sensitivity Symposium, Pittsburgh, PA May 1-2, 2011.
- ❖ Presented *Reproductive Justice in Practice: Using Sticky Ideas for Reproductive Workshops*, at the University of South Carolina (USC) Women's & Gender Studies Conference, *Recovering Voices/Constructing Identities*, March, 2011.
- ❖ Presented *Reproductive Justice and Health Equity for Marginalized Women in Shelters* at the USC Health Disparities Research Network meeting, April 2011.
- ❖ Presented poster: *Finding Messages that Stick: Reproductive Health Workshops for Paraprofessionals*, at the 4th annual Women's Health Research Forum, University of South Carolina School of Medicine, October, 2010, Columbia, SC and at the Clyburn Health Disparities lecture, USC, April, 2011.
- ❖ Presented *Putting Reproductive Justice into Practice with Workshops for Paraprofessionals* at APHA, November 2010.
- ❖ *Seeing Through a New Lens to Transform STI/HIV Prevention Messages*, accepted for presentation at the SC HIV/STD Conference *Reform, Transform, Perform: Maximizing Our Impact*, Columbia, SC October 2011.
- ❖ *Assessing unmet reproductive health needs for women in shelters*, accepted for presentation at APHA, October, 2011.

Outreach and other Collaboration

- ❖ Co-sponsored and provided expertise regarding reproductive health coverage on planning the forum *Demystifying Health Care Reform: What it Means to You*, held November 16 at the University of South Carolina (125 attendees).
- ❖ Developed reproductive health/justice education and talking points for groups.
- ❖ Partnered with We Are Family, a non-profit focused on GLBTQ youth, to do a workshop for foster parents on reproductive issues facing GLBTQ youth in foster care, and also do a panel discussion on these issues for MUSC and College of Charleston students, and an MUSC grand rounds.
- ❖ Provide reproductive health/maternal and child health expertise to the South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families (SCCHF), a statewide coalition focusing on legislative and policy issues affecting reproductive health and rights.
- ❖ Developed the *SC Resource Guide*, an access directory of reproductive services in South Carolina.
- ❖ Provided educational materials to legislators regarding reproductive health.
- ❖ Creating information for Advocates for Youth project to use new media to reach young adults in SC (texting, MySpace/Facebook)—there is texting information available about all reproductive health services in the state.
- ❖ Assist in fund raising for the South Carolina Women's Choice Fund.
- ❖ Provide informational talks on reproductive justice and state-specific issues to groups (e.g., county democratic women's organizations, NOW state chapter).
- ❖ Work with national and regional organizations to devise messaging, content and curricula around reproductive health and justice (e.g., Reproductive Health Training Project, SisterSong, Association of Reproductive Health Professionals).
- ❖ Recognized with a Reproductive Rights Award by the SCCHF at their bi-annual meeting in October, 2009.
- ❖ Lead trainer recognized as a 2011 Hero in the Field of maternal and child health by March of Dimes, Low Country and Palmetto Healthy Starts and Select Health.

For more information or to discuss how SCAI might work with your organization, contact:
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