



Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health

Overview

Fiscal Year 2010

VISION

We envision a world in which all young adults use their power to achieve health and well-being in their own lives and for their communities.

MISSION

In partnership with youth, we advocate sound policies and practices that promote a positive approach to adolescent sexual health and parenting.

STRATEGIES

- Youth leadership development
- Grassroots organizing
- Youth and adult training
- Policy analysis and development
- Legislative advocacy

POLICY PRIORITIES

- Increase access to and equity of adolescent sexual health care.
- Increase access to and equity of responsible sexuality education in schools and communities.
- Ensure support for pregnant and parenting youth to complete their educational goals.

HISTORY

Founded in 1977 as the Illinois Caucus on Teenage Pregnancy, our organization has accomplished much in the fields of adolescent welfare, workforce development, health, and parenting.

The 1960s introduced the birth control pill—and the potential for women to gain greater control over their reproductive lives. In 1967, Cook County Hospital began dispensing birth control, and within 10 years the hospital's birth rate dropped by a third. In 1969, a new state law legalizing family planning services for unmarried adolescents of any age was passed after an 11-year-old gave birth to twins.

In the 1970s, the Chicago Women's Liberation Union worked tirelessly to set up grassroots health programs for women. When CWLU demobilized, activist Jenny Knauss continued organizing around health care system reform on behalf of Illinois young people, and in 1983 she became the first executive director of the Caucus. In 1991, we changed our name to the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health to reflect the organization's broadening agenda.

For more than three decades, ICAH has organized and trained young people to advocate for issues that directly affect their lives and communities. ICAH has conducted statewide research, developed resources, changed public policy, and hosted frequent events and training sessions for youth and service providers, always with an emphasis on building youth leadership skills and serving marginalized populations, including low-income, immigrant, homeless, LGBTQ, and pregnant and parenting adolescents.

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*(On leave May-Oct 2010)

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Soo Ji Min
Executive Director

MILESTONES

1977: Illinois Caucus on Teenage Pregnancy founded following a conference on the increasing adolescent pregnancy rate nationwide.

1984: Directory of statewide resources for pregnant and parenting youth published.

1986: First Youth Advisory Board established.

1993: Legislation introduced and passed to establish a committee to report to the Illinois General Assembly on pregnant and parenting youth public aid policies.

1995: Successful Networking for Adolescent Parents program developed to create a statewide case management system for pregnant and parenting wards.

1996: Statewide coalition Youth Need to Know Network formed to oppose federal abstinence-only-until-marriage policy.

1999: Illinois Department of Human Services makes policy changes increasing access for young parents to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

2002: All Teen Health website launched, making adolescent health information available to youth, parents, and service providers.

2006: Chicago Public Schools and Urbana School District passes school board policies mandating comprehensive sexuality education.

2008: Statewide Youth Policy Council formed to advocate for responsible sexual health education and the rejection of federal abstinence-only program funding.

2009: Freeport School District mandates comprehensive sexuality education.

2010: State Sexuality Education Report and Recommendations released.

FOUNDATION AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS

Advocates for Youth	Illinois State Board of Education
Alphawood Foundation	Irving Harris Foundation
BlueCross and BlueShield of Illinois	Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Brinson Foundation	Ms. Foundation for Women
Leo S. Guthman Fund	National Institute for Reproductive Health
Catalyst Fund/Chicago Foundation for Women	New Prospect Foundation
Chicago Community Trust	Polk Bros. Foundation
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