



Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health

Health Activism Timeline

1960-2009

1960s

First birth control pill available in the U.S. Mary Jane Snyder, Planned Parenthood leader and a Caucus founder, speaks at schools about family planning.

1965

The Illinois General Assembly passes the Sex Education Act, which encourages sex education in schools.

1967

Chicago Public Schools establish a "family living center" in a church. Dr. Carl Meyer signs an executive order approving birth control dispensing in Cook County Hospital. At that time, the hospital is the second largest obstetrics/gynecology unit in the world, with 20,000 births a year. Less than a decade after Meyer's executive order, the number of births drops to 13,500.

1968

Dr. Robert Mendelsohn issues *Score Board of Death*, comparing the number of deaths per 1,000 children in East Garfield Park and Lawndale (120) with those in Highland Park and Glencoe (18).

1969

An 11-year-old girl who could not receive family planning services at Cook County Hospital because of her age bears twins, prompting physicians' advocacy, and the passage, of a state law legalizing family planning services for unmarried adolescents of any age.

1970

Planned Parenthood sets up Teen Scenes, a youth center, at Cook County Hospital.

1977

The Illinois Caucus on Teenage Pregnancy is founded following a conference on the increasing adolescent pregnancy rate nationwide. United Way provides the Caucus one part-time staff person, Suzanne Hinds.

Austin Youth Health Center, a clinic, opens in a high school.

1980

The Statewide Taskforce on Adolescent Parent Support Services, created by the state legislature, reviews adolescent pregnancy in Illinois, conducts preliminary review of current services, and develops goals with recommended actions.

1983

The Caucus hires its first executive director, Jenny Knauss, who's in charge of carrying out the recommendations of the Statewide Taskforce. Caucus employee and Carbondale resident Bunny Shupe begins organizing local chapters downstate and pregnancy prevention activities in many counties.

1984

The Caucus publishes a directory of statewide resources for pregnant and parenting youth and receives a grant to assist schools in establishing pregnancy prevention activities.

With the Ounce of Prevention Fund, in cooperation with Illinois Parents Too Soon, it sponsors *Teenage Pregnancy, a Community Responsibility: A Statewide Leadership Conference* in Chicago.

1985

The Caucus sponsors a conference in northwestern Illinois, *Crisis in the Rural Family*, on the effect of the farm crisis.

The Caucus holds 25 chapter meetings across the state and testifies before the Illinois State Board of Education on schools and teen pregnancy as well as developing a housing directory for homeless youth in Chicago.

1986

The Caucus brings young people to Chicago to spend a morning with Oprah Winfrey on a segment called *Teens Speak Out With Oprah Winfrey*. Soon after, the Caucus's first Youth Advisory Board is established.

The Caucus holds another statewide conference, *Strategies for Pregnancy Prevention in Early Adolescence*.

1987

A Caucus-trained youth advocate works in Chicago Public Schools to prevent pregnant and parenting females from dropping out.

The Caucus publishes the report *Homeless in Chicago: The Case of Pregnant and Parenting Youth* and the pamphlet *The Young Parents Resource Network*.

1988

Statewide Training and Information Center established in the Caucus's Carbondale office.

1989

The Caucus holds statewide conference *ADVOCATE!* in Collinsville and successfully advocates for the first school-based day care center at Orr High School.

1990

The Caucus initiates the Chicago Policy Project, expanding the policy staff of and providing technical assistance to the Department of Children and Family Services in its work with pregnant and parenting wards of the state.

With input from youth focus groups and interviews, the Caucus develops a strategic plan.

1991

The Caucus changes its name to the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH), reflecting the organization's broadening agenda.

ICAH staff members are invited to sit on the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States' Community Advisory Committee in New York City, enabling the staff to engage with colleagues nationwide.

ICAH joins the Child Welfare League of America to expand advocacy work for children in the welfare system.

1992

ICAH and the Ounce of Prevention Fund sponsor the conference *The Challenge of Lean Times*. The keynote speaker is Dr. Joycelyn Elders, former U.S. Surgeon General.

Based on interviews with young women and providers, ICAH publishes a pamphlet on parental notification for abortion.

ICAH organizes statewide hearings on teen pregnancy with Citizens' Assembly.

1993

ICAH publishes booklet *How to Open a Day Care Center in a High School*.

ICAH introduces and passes legislation to establish a committee to report to the Illinois General Assembly on pregnant and parenting youth public aid policies.

1994

ICAH publishes *A Statewide Plan to Improve the Health of Adolescents* in Illinois and holds a summit on adolescents and national health reform.

1995

ICAH develops Successful Networking for Adolescent Parents program to create a statewide case management system for pregnant and parenting wards.

ICAH mobilizes residents in three Chicago communities for the Communities Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy project.

Invited by the Ms. Foundation, executive director Jenny Knauss attends the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

1996

Executive director Jenny Knauss attends a press conference organized by the National Campaign to Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy at the White House, where she and other invitees meet with President Clinton.

ICAH launches the Youth Need to Know Network, an Illinois coalition opposing the federal abstinence-only-until-marriage legislation passed as part of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act.

1997

ICAH creates *Take Care of Yourself* brochure, designed to inform youth about their health care and confidentiality rights.

1998

After passage of the State Children's Health Insurance Program in 1997, ICAH participates in a taskforce to design a program granting health coverage to adolescents up to age 19 in Illinois, which later becomes KidCare. ICAH also launches the Healthy Choices Campaign and, in collaboration with the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition, brings youth to Springfield to talk to legislators about KidCare for Advocacy Day.

1999

ICAH publishes *Teen Parents and Welfare Reform* in Illinois, based on interviews and focus groups with adolescent parents and service providers. ICAH then works with the Illinois Department of Human Services to make policy changes increasing access for young parents to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

2000

Following the passage of the federal Workforce Investment Act, ICAH convenes the WIA Working Group for Youth. Young people plan Youth First Campaign and meet with high-level city directors to request increased city funding for youth programs and services.

2001

ICAH helps write and advocate for H.B. 875, amending the Illinois School Code to require that "factual information presented in course material and instruction shall be medically accurate." Bill passes the House but is not allowed to be heard in the Senate Education Committee.

Following strong advocacy efforts, the Illinois Department of Human Services makes policy changes to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, including the elimination of a work requirement for young parent recipients completing high school or GED programs. ICAH hires and trains young parents to inform peers on Chicago's West Side about their right to TANF and Teen Parent Services.

2002

In partnership with youth leaders and Street Level Youth Media, ICAH launches All Teen Health website, which makes adolescent health information available to youth, parents, and service providers.

ICAH employee Bunny Shupe, co-chair of the Illinois Consortium on Adolescent Pregnancy, coordinates statewide survey on comprehensive health education in Illinois schools.

2004

ICAH hosts first annual *Action Out Loud!*, a weeklong summer youth activist training camp, in Chicago.

2005

ICAH launches the Illinois Campaign for Responsible Sex Education with Planned Parenthood Chicago Area and the Illinois Planned Parenthood Council. ICAH convenes over 250 youth and adults in Springfield to lobby for the Responsible Sex Education Program Act (S.B. 457). Local coalitions in Chicago and Urbana-Champaign launch efforts to change local sex education policies.

The Illinois Health Curriculum Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at The University of Chicago reveals that, while 92% of sex education teachers want to teach comprehensive sex education, two-thirds are not due to lack of curriculum and resources.

2006

ICAH helps pass the Family Life and Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Policy in Chicago Public Schools. The policy mandates age-appropriate sex education for students in grades 6-12, requires trainings for all teachers, and adds a student representative to the Curriculum Review Committee.

The Urbana-Champaign School Board accepts recommendations to improve sex education guidelines for teachers in grades 5-12.

ICAH establishes training and resources department to create a statewide service delivery system of sexual health trainings and curricula for adolescent health educators and service providers.

2007

ICAH publishes *Curriculum Content Review: An in-depth look at sex education curricula in use in Illinois classrooms*.

2008

ICAH forms Illinois Youth Policy Council to advocate for responsible sexual health education and the rejection of federal abstinence-only program funding.

2009

ICAH and Illinois Youth Policy Council host How 2 Get Down Training and Youth Lobby Day in Springfield to advocate for the Reproductive Health and Access Act (H.B. 2354).

ICAH also convenes Stakeholder Summit to develop statewide and local recommendations to guide sexual health education provision in Illinois.