

Promoting What Works
A Symposium of Promising Approaches for Supporting
Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents

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Promoting Effective Policy

Pat Paluzzi: I realize I have to update my bio; it has been way more than two decades. Then you will think I entered into this old, so anyway. It's really nice to be here and it's really nice to see the room filled when we are talking about pregnant and parenting teens. You feel like there are not a lot of people that care about the population in the way you do. It's really nice. I understand that there are at least this many and more trying to pay attention on the webinar. It's a great response. I want to give a shout out to Alicia Richmond Scott; I know this is her baby, She put this together and worked hard to make sure this happen. There she is over there. Thank you for doing this. It's a great event. Healthy Teen Network is pleased to be a part of today's event. What I'm going to try to do as I talk about policy as it impacts pregnant and parenting teens is to increase your sense of urgency, to serve as advocates, and to increase your knowledge about the policy issues that effects pregnant and parenting teens, help provide you with websites and ideas of resources that could help you with that. One of the resources you will see throughout are some video clips so that we were able to make filming talking to teen moms. We were able to do this as part of a policy work we did with the policy platform we put together. These are available, not the clips you are going to see, I shortened them. We have some clips that you can use for your own advocacy work, Pam Jones and Crittenden Services in Washington for helping us locate the young women and who were gracious in their time. I will tell you that we asked them to talk about sort of barriers and what would some barriers to sort of different access to different services along the way and what helped them. We didn't ask them about policy, but to tie it to that. I think mostly what you are going to hear today are the things that helped. We do try and spend more time talking on the sort of from a positive framework with this population. Okay. So. Policy and legislation. We all know there's a dual edge to policy and legislation. Sometimes you know it does lots of great things and we know that most of the programs that we run and the people that we serve rely on legislation in order to be available, so Title X and Title V, these are all massive pieces of legislation that have been with us for a long time and may survive a few more years. Then we also know that legislation has done a lot to grow this field in particular to provide the support for development implementation of research and services for populations. Almost every presenter up here was presenting on a program that was funded through the Adolescent Family Life grant. Particularly that piece of legislation has done a lot to grow what we know about this field. We also know well intended legislation can sometimes have unsorted effects. No child left behind we know there's lots of issues where people thought that we assumed people thought they were doing the right thing. We will give them the benefit of the doubt. Okay. Advocacy

is critical. And I am sure many of you, but legislatures don't understand the impact of the policy at the individual or community level. They don't work at that level. Many people up here today talked about even that one on one an understanding that you get when you are actually providing direct service. They don't understand this. We need to help to educate them about what really is the reality down on the road. They are responsive to their constituents and a lot of phone calls and e-mails will make a difference and they are responsive whether you are researchers, providers, director recipients and I would say particularly if you are direct recipients. We will listen to you. It is more challenging but much more critical for those of us who work in fields that are controversial such as pregnancy prevention, sex ed, abortion, family planning, and pregnant and parenting teens to remain vigilant and remain strong advocators and educators in our field. I think that teen parents can and should be supported to self-advocate. You are going to hear from our first teen parent. Her name is Alba. She was 22 years old when we filmed her. She has two sons ages four and two. She's going to matter of fact make the case that sometimes teens get pregnant and need help.

Video: Trying to keep pretty much the number of teens who get pregnant low so maybe that's the reason they don't want too many teenage moms to know about resources and they try to keep everyone down in the shadow so not everybody is open and out there about it. The truth of the matter is that teenagers so often they get pregnant whatever the reason and we do need help.

So Alba was talking about a particular school district where she went to school that I cut out so I wouldn't slander them in public. Clearly she was saying as a teen mom she didn't get support and she wasn't told about the things that is might have been available and we will hear again about the things we found out later because her school wasn't supportive and forthcoming from her own words and we know they want to keep that stuff quiet. They don't want to be known for their high rates of pregnant or parenting teens in their school. So our role as advocates or legislative educators is to really to understand and make that link between the policy and outcomes for our target populations and then to create clear and concise messages which convey that understanding to legislators and their aides which is who you are meeting with and most of them don't have our background or the luxury of time to really understand the issue. This is particularly challenging when talking about pregnant and parenting teens. How can you focus on primary prevention and supporting the pregnant and parenting teen even that trying to get people to understand that you can and should support both it's a very challenging message to convey. To try and make it understandable in sound bite is really challenging. We spent a long time in 2009 trying to do this. Trying to look at some domains, outcomes that you've heard talked about today in employment, education, healthy relationships, repeat births, healthy babies and pregnancies and we spent a lot of time looking across these domains and then looking at current legislation and where we might make some major suggestions for new legislation, amend current legislation, or make minor suggestions and put this together in something called the young family policy platform. We had a lot of partners – Lara Kaufmann, National Women's Law Center, Child Trends was involved in the process. Pam weren't you involved, Pam Jones was involved. We had a lot of partners on this work with us and spent a year trying to put it together. Why we use this

particular set of domains. These life domains as our outcomes is we were basing it on early work done in the mid 90's by a group Center for Assessment and Policy Development (CAPD) were some of the first people to look at what teen parents need to kind of be successful. They looked at it and broke it down into graduation from high school, viable employment and delaying the second birth was part of it. There were these many other things so that their goal was to break the cycle of poverty and help everybody rise up and be healthier as opposed to concentrating on subsequent births. Well, I guess I don't have to worry about that.

This is Uniqwa. She was 16 years old when we filmed her and had one son, he's 13 months now. She's going to tell how being a teen mom makes everything more difficult.

Video: Wow your friends change, you know some people you thought were your best friends and after you had your baby you won't have that best friend. Some of them are good really friends for you and the school and the money – it's everything, it's not impossible it's just difficult. It's more difficult than you know when I didn't have a baby.

Isn't he the cutest? I show this clip because of him I think. I just love that little baby. He never stops the whole time she's trying to talk. Okay so basically she says everything your friends turn on you and school is more challenging. We know housing can be an issue and everything is more difficult. Again, looking across the different domains, so after we decided to go that route we looked at different sort of legislation area, legislative areas looking at -- Health and Human Services and housing and education. Then we made statements about how important it is to look at those areas when we are tracking about parenting pregnant teens. You would see that's where prenatal care and postnatal care would come in play ensuring adequate birth weight babies, better nutrition etc. In housing obviously young families benefit from stable and supportive housing as we all do, but can face more challenges depending on who they are living with or whether or not they have a place to live at all. We know that the education is really important and not just graduating from high school which is challenging enough, but as Laura brought up earlier this post high school education is increasingly important if you are ever going to have a livable wage job in this country. The other domain so work force and life skills development. Long term employment which affords growth opportunity so that you can support a family. Child welfare and development that these kids need access to early learning and development opportunities and when the parents have better parenting skills and healthier relationships everybody fairs better. Income security, having a temporary safety net at times when you need it. This is looking where looking at TANF comes in and knowledge development and transfer this is where we put it together in a category that you will see in a moment that we thought would strengthen the field. Okay. So the next thing that we did was that we looked at existing legislation and we reviewed 59 programs that were currently in existence that served pregnant and parenting teens in some way. Everything from run away, and homeless youth, to Title V and everything in between there. We looked for easy insertions, so if there was a place where a piece of legislation could be improved and more targeted for this population just by inserting parenting and pregnant teens into the language we suggested doing that. We also looked where there were gap areas and we created new legislation or proposed some significant

changes to existing legislation where we thought it needed to be beefed up to address the population. We tried to make it user friendly. We developed action step guides and things like that. This is all available on our website if you are interested in taking a look at it. So these are our suggestions that we made. Keep in mind this is 2009. In 2009 keep in mind that it's a different time now in 2011. We are going to talk about that as we go on. In 2009 we looked at the Adolescent Family Life program. We said that we think this is a great program, but since it hasn't been reviewed in a very long time; the legislation hasn't been changed since it was created back in the 70's that there might be updating to it to improve it by moving it to an outcome based program, using evidence base, updating to include option counseling, mandating a set of services etc. and also look at, these are examples so also look at the maternal child health block grant, Title V, this is a place where we suggested dropping in language. If you add programs designed specifically to improve the health of pregnant and parenting youth and their children as an eligible purpose of SPRANS a component of MCH program then you add potential to support that population. So going through the difference areas. Here's Alba, she's going to make the case how she didn't hear about services and support at the time she needed them.

Video: I learned about job core after wards. That would have been probably a good idea to get into while I was pregnant. There are plenty of resources that you can do from the comfort of your home or go on-line and go to school even if you have a job it's pretty hard you can do it after. There are night classes now that most colleges offer. There's a lot of resource that I wish I would have known about that I didn't. They are out there if you really look.

So it's those kinds of things when we think the idea of having resources centers across the country would really be beneficial. We had a yearlong work study intern who we asked to try to beef up our directory. We try to keep a directory of pregnant and parenting teen programs since we are a national organization that focuses on that group. We hadn't effectively updated it in a while. She spent six months e-mailing and phone calls. So we put a piece together to kind of talk about the challenges and in locating programs. That you know we sort of came up with three categories of states where they have directories. I will brag for Minnesota - they have a great directory. We can locate over 150 programs with two phone calls. There's the state that don't have that central person or directory they have enough programs within numerous phone calls and e-mails you can identify 20 programs in the state. Then there's state where you can't find anything. That's us having a dedicated person on the phone and e-mailing and trying. So demonstrates how challenging it might be for providers on the ground to figure out where to send young men and women. Okay. Housing. We made suggestions as an example to the runaway and homeless youth act. That's the act that supports maternity group homes. We made several suggestions like increasing the age limit from 21-24, establishing standards for the care of young children including studies to target perhaps importantly renaming the group homes to be inclusive of fathers, so that was an example. Education we created something actually called the young parent education access to education program. Did we create this? Yes. It's hard for me to remember all of these things. Congress and the administration should authorize the appropriate funds for a young parent access to education program, to be administered by the U.S. Department of Education and would

provide grants to state and local educational agencies to formulate policy and offer targeted assistance to pregnant and parenting teens in school. We created this program in 2009 and while it never went anywhere it's similar to the scope of the pregnancy assistance fund grantees out there in 2010. We also proposed amendments to provide for other existing programs. There's been some conversation here and I think that Uniqwa says it for us. That you know some questions back and forth about the motivation and do teen parents want to do well. We know they have a lot of issues. We also know many of them are motivated to do better because of this child. And Uniqwa is going to make that statement for us.

Video: It's hard but you have a bit of motivation to graduate. I try to do really good at everything. I have been doing well. It's just I try to motivate myself for him.

Work force and life skills development. We look at the parent work force investment demonstration program which was intended to provide and it still does exist actually. It exists as a demonstration program. We were suggesting language to make it more of a mandatory program so it's longer term stability for it. I don't believe that's happened. We also added some more youth friendly and focused amendments and suggested some for the work force investment act, and foster care program. Child welfare. There was a bill, a piece of legislation and the education begins at home act that we were proposing and supporting so that it could expand quality programs for early childhood and home visitation programs and school readiness etc. that one never left the committee. We do know we had the home visiting program that came out under President Obama. We do know that something different is out there now under the Affordable Care Act. You are going to hear from Alba first followed by Uniqwa. Alba felt like she wasn't getting support followed by Uniqwa who actually was in a great program where she did get great support. If you do have the support it makes a difference for these young women.

Video: Okay, so you mentioned you were in high school when you had your first son. What was the most difficult part of getting your education as a teen mother? I had to drop out of high school with my first child. I didn't know I still could continue my education even though I had a child, because I had no one to watch him. He was a small baby and I didn't want to place him in stranger's hands. That was the hardest part. That's the reason I dropped out because I felt like I had no help at all.

Video: For me no, there's no difficulty he's in the program called Family Services Agency incorporation. They watch him for free because we go to school for teen parents. They will provide diapers and food and everything. We just have to go to school and we have to have a certain grade point average to stay in there. That wasn't hard you, just had to, it was a big wait list and everything.

You can see a difference where the program exists, she is able to go to school, although she has challenges and there's a big waiting list.

Under income security we looked at TANF. Anybody who works with pregnant and parenting teens knows there are issues with TANF when it comes to this population. We

looked at things like support during transition, the housing restriction that is go along and continues lifetime limit at age 20 to give them a chance to finish high school if they had to leave awhile while they had the baby. Moving toward an outcome base more than a quantity based model. So they have better services as opposed to just a mill. This knowledge development and transfer we approach this from two different directions one is that we think we need to spend more time building a science around the pregnant and parenting teen field. Those who work in primary prevention field know primary prevention is way ahead. They got components and they have development tools an all of these things going on. We are not quite there; we haven't had the same level of support. It's not a population as we started out saying, easy to get support for. We need to do that. We thought that having we proposed some research that we thought would help that. We think having a national clearinghouse where data and things can be found can be a helpful resource for the field. Excuse me. We also looked at this was a policy piece that we looked at. Something called the federal youth coordination act. This is something that never left the committee and never became law. If you look at what was listed in here and I think it looks an awful lot like what the Office of Adolescent Health has been charged to do. We haven't lost the activities we are going about them in a slightly different way. Okay. So then it's 2010 and President Obama comes in his inaugural speech that we are going to restore science to its rightful place and many of us got excited, we had these things that we didn't know and we could move forward on and the money started coming out. Well, the money didn't come out right away. We got excited but we also got nervous and we started educating there was a flurry of evidence based activity, you know the Office of Adolescent Health was formed and the funding was being announced for the teen pregnancy prevention tiers one and two, pregnancy assistance fund. We had the home visiting program and the prep grantees and the CDC and teen pregnancy prevention community initiative, the prep special innovation project. I may have missed one or two. A lots of millions of dollars coming out all of it based around promoting evidence based programs. Only using it evidence based programs or testing models. Tier one focused on proven and effective programs and tier two on some testing of new ones. And that pregnancy assistance funds was supported for parenting and pregnant teens particularly around education. Seventeen states are funded today do that work. Home visiting program, 49 states and the District of Columbia are funded there and prep grantees I think there, I should know the prep grantees there's 40 something -- 46. And then the CDC project is the third way this more of a primary prevention topic, which is working on community wide initiatives to provide teen pregnancy. All of a sudden there's millions of dollars coming into our field to use science based approaches. We got nervous and started educating and educating. I think everybody who works in the advocacy was running down and talking-to people. We weren't completely sure the field was ready for the science base. You heard some issues about implementation and recruitment and retention. We don't know how to do that stuff on the grand scale. The bad thing that could happen that I have given us five years from now we didn't know success. There was a lot of activity to sort of say let's make sure you think about all the training and tech think call support it takes. That was a lot of what we focused on in 2012 is to try to, 2010 -- (laughter) time flies. 2010 is to have our voice heard around all of that. Of course also we activated our base to look at run way an homeless youth act and inclusion of pregnancy assistance fund as well as health care reform and home visiting an also because it was

coming up we had a recommendation tied to the elementary and secondary education act which I am going to skip this slide. I understand that Laura is going to talk about this in detail. This is work we have been doing. She will do a much better job with this. I will give the cliff notes from what I have been told. She's going to talk about that work. So this is just a little inspiration from Lisette in this talk.

Video: You have to believe in yourself and that's where all the evidence that I have been a part of has helped me so much in believing that if you have a child you go ahead and do it for them.

Crittenden and Early HeadStart, give a shout out to them. So then it's fast forward to 2011. Once they got into health care reform that's all that happened in 2010. Nothing else happened legislatively. You fast forward to 2011 and we are in a budget crisis now everything we thought was okay for a while is now being threatened and is a pawn in balancing the budget. It's Title X and it's the opposite of adolescent health and the whole teen pregnancy initiative at one time was on the chopping block in the republican's budget. Major cuts to CDC, HealthyStart and Title V and they also Adolescent Family Life program. It's just everything that we do was the pawn. It really, you know do they hate poor people or do they hate women and children or do they hate poor women and children? You have to wonder which it is. I'm sorry I know this is a government thing what else do you take home from that? That became all the action is to try to say what you could in the 2011 budget, so what happened is a lot of groups that do advocacy work got together looked at all of these fights on all of these fronts. They said whose going to take the lead? We need to make sure somebody is covering all of these things and we are not tripping over each other but they're all getting covered. Again, because we focused on the population we took the lead on pregnant and parenting teen population. I will say that Dr. Florsheim called us at one point -- I don't mean to get you in trouble. This is what's going on.

We are on it. We sent out a lot of alerts and we got people to write, e-mail to call. We had a Hill day planned that we are going to talk about the Adolescent Family Life program and some other things and it happened to be a day before the budget was getting decided. It was a very exciting day in Washington. What was interesting is that going back to this slide everything except the Adolescent Family Life program was being threatened from the Republican side of things it was coming out of their budget. The Adolescent Family Life thing was being threatened in Obama's budget. We found ourselves trying to figure out how to handle that. We were called by some really sort of fairly conservative aid or congressperson in South Carolina who called us and said and kind of wanted to talk to us about this. You kind of say oh my goodness. What's going on here? As we heard Adolescent Family Life program was an Oren Hatch program it was a Republican program back in the day. Because of the way it's written and because of some things that not as crazy about it -- it's a family supportive program. It's got both sides going on there. So we found out when we were advocating and writing messages and going to the Hill the day we were visiting both sides of the aisle. This was a place where we thought we could get some education of the Democrats to say Obama the reason was it duplicative of

the pregnancy assistance funds our education was no it's not and here's how it's not and here's what PAF does and here's what AFL does and at that time and because we don't really know the future of what's going to happen with the whole health care reform bill. PAF is funded under health care reform. Let's imagine they get rid of AFL and they don't move it into anything else for pregnant and parenting teens and gets PAF locked off in some and there's nothing. That was kind of our education piece. It was real interesting visiting both republicans and democrats. It's really an interesting day, that's all I have to say. It was a very interesting day. People's reaction to us of course they look you up. It's flat out saying we are not here to talk about primary prevention. I just want to talk to you about this one particular thing they would listen if we didn't try to do that other battle. That's what we sort of spent 2011 doing. You know it wasn't cut. It wasn't locked out at 2011 but it's on the chopping block again for 2012. We need to continue to advocate for Adolescent Family Life as we move forward. 2012 is like back to the future. We are battling the same things. We are threatened with pushing on a lot of conservative items and you know kind of like in that movie he goes back to his parents and it's the bobby socks time-- like are we supposed to go back to the bobby sock time? I don't know what we are supposed to do here. That's what it feels like. It's going to be really important that we all stay as knowledgeable as we can. It's also incredibly challenging right now. Shelby is reading the new budget right now, but there's only so much you can track - like they are coming out every ten minutes. There's so much of that stuff. You do need to pay attention as best you can to what's going on that impacts your programs and be on a look out for alerts and make those phone calls and send those e-mails in because they do make a difference. The other thing is that we have already sort of seen that as they are looking at cutting budgets more on a federal level that who were once our collaborators are not going to be, either going to be a little more skittish about collaborating with us. We are going to have to really kind of make sure that we meld those relationships and find common ground to kind of get what we can all get to keep our programs going. And it's going to be important that we spend our time doing that. Here are some resources. We have a lot of stuff on parenting and pregnant teens including for the researcher who asked a logic model that takes all of those components and lays out all the interventions and mediating and blah, blah, blah. There's the logic model for young families that has been put together and the policy platform we talked about. These are the other organizations that have like all of the key information for some of these various aspects so depending on what your interest is their good sources for finding information. I didn't list National Women's Law Center, but as I said they are doing a lot of Title IX in this education act that Laura will talk about some more. So the final word we are going to hear is from Lisette, she's going to tell us everything she accomplished in her life. She had two kids, one at age 15 and one at 17. She got hooked up into some good programs that supported her and really the message here and I think the message that we always want to give to folks when we do educate them, whether legislatures or not. The pregnant teens need a lot of support. They can do well if we pay attention and give them the support. They want to do well. They can do well, but it's up to us to kind of keep the good fight and keep the resources coming to support them to do well. Here's Lisette telling us everything she accomplished.

Video: I am 23 years old I now have my own place. I live by myself with my children. I am happily working with the people. I am working one on one with all kinds of people and all kinds of parents at the Montgomery County child support office. I am thinking about going back to school for my masters. I am enjoying my children like I never thought I would enjoy two little kids running around. I am constantly thinking of ways to improve myself as a parent, setting goals for myself that I now see as realistic. Thank you very much.

Applause

Reesa Webb: I think we do have a couple of minutes for questions if anyone has any of Pat. Don't forget you need to go up to the microphone. Okay I think we are good. I would like to thank you Pat for that wonderful presentation and the Healthy Teen Network for advocating on behalf of our programs that serve pregnant and parenting teens, thank you again.