



*Bridging the Gaps: Eliminating Disparities  
in Teen Pregnancy and Sexual Health  
June 4-6, 2014*

**Community Mobilization to  
Reduce Teen Birth Rates:  
Personal Perspectives from the Field**

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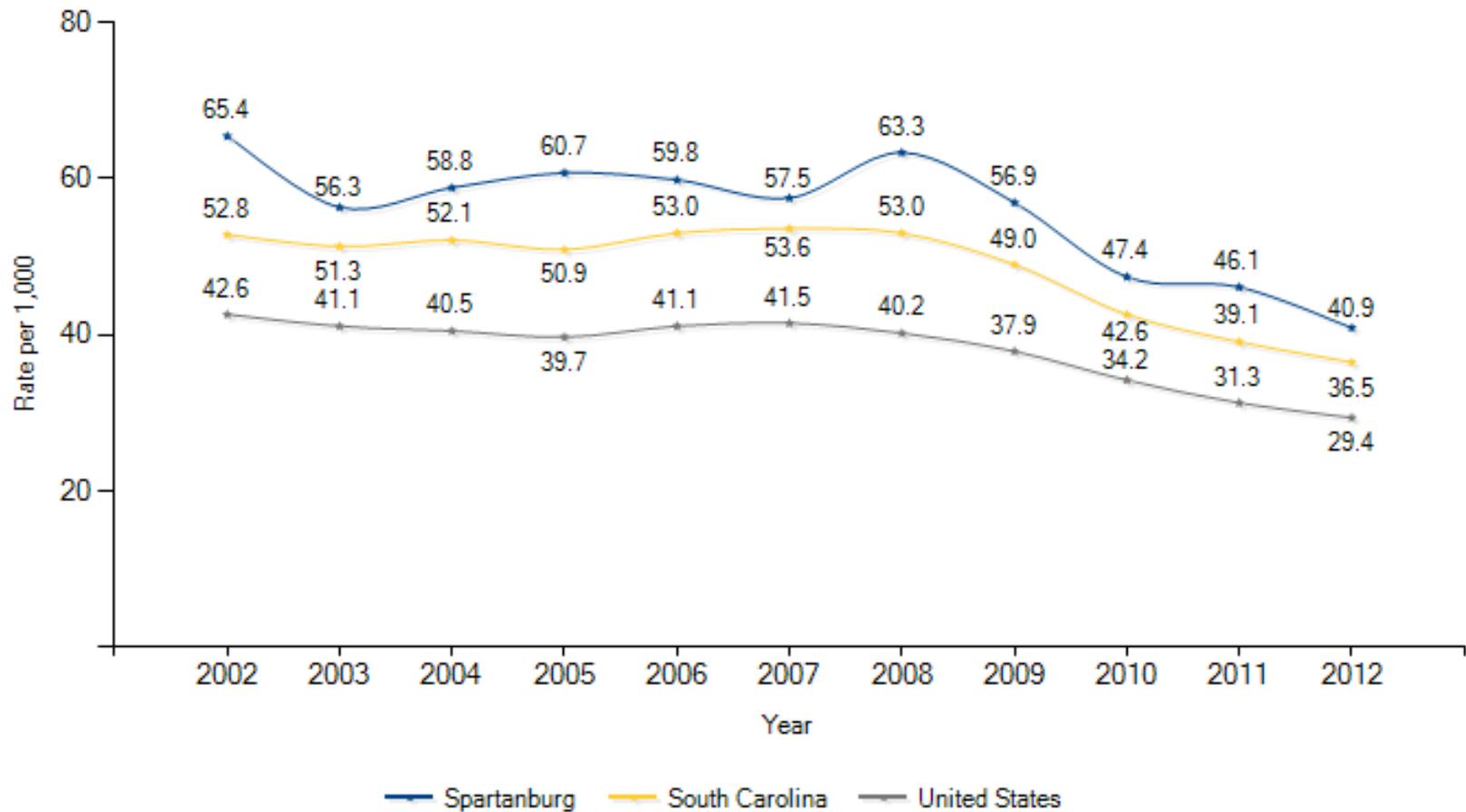
# Objectives



At the conclusion of this presentation, workshop participants will be able to:

- 1) Name at least two activities that must take place when **beginning community mobilization work** for teen pregnancy prevention;
- 2) Identify at least two areas for **capacity building** that must be addressed to mobilize a community; and
- 3) Describe at least two ways to improve **sustainability** for teen pregnancy prevention efforts through community mobilization.

# Spartanburg, SC – The Challenge



# Spartanburg, SC – The Support



**United Way  
of the Piedmont**



# Spartanburg, SC – The Plan



“No single organization is responsible for any major social problem, nor can any single organization cure it.” <sup>1</sup>

- Intensive community-wide work
- Funded by CDC / OAH and local funders
- Designate one person to be focused on teen pregnancy



# The Plan



## Community Mobilization

“engages all sectors of the population in a community-wide effort to address a health, social, or environmental issue. It brings together policy makers and opinion leaders; local, state, and federal governments; professional groups; religious groups; businesses; and individual community members. Community mobilization empowers individuals and groups to take some kind of action to facilitate change.”<sup>2</sup>

# The Plan



## Community Engagement

“refers to values, strategies, and actions that support authentic partnerships, including mutual respect and active, inclusive participation; power sharing and equity; mutual benefit or finding the ‘win-win’ possibility; and flexibility in pursuing goals, methods, and time frames to fit the priorities, needs, and capacities of communities.”<sup>3</sup>

# The Plan

AWARENESS



ACTION



INFRASTRUCTURE

# The Results (to-date)



- Success with clinics – one partner clinic now responsible for 33% of LARCs inserted in teens statewide (through health department)
- Success with outreach – more than 90 agencies/groups have worked with us in some way
- Success with evidence-based programs for teens – 8 partners implementing with over 1500 young people this year
- Success with teen birth rate - declined 14% in the past 3 years & currently the lowest it has been in recorded history

# Lessons Learned



1. Mobilizing a community requires a substantial investment.
2. Nothing happens without first building strong relationships.
3. Engage funders for both initial buy-in and sustainability.
4. Ensure buy-in and support from all levels of the community.
5. Commitment to best practices is key.
6. Customize your approach to fit the target audience.

# Lessons Learned



7. Increase teen pregnancy prevention efforts by connecting with other community issues.
8. Staff and partners should have the knowledge and skills to work with diverse communities.
9. Money is important but has to be coupled with the motivation and capacity to produce outcomes.
10. Identify teen pregnancy prevention 'champions.'
11. Be prepared to manage controversy.

# In the beginning...



## 1. Mobilizing a community requires a substantial investment

- Who takes the lead?
- What resources are there?
- Who is interested in being involved?
- Time!



## **2. Nothing happens without first building strong relationships**

- Personal connection - trust and respect
- First date – not a marriage proposal
- Listen more than you speak

### **3. Engage funders for both initial buy-in and sustainability.**

- Introduce the issue
- Educate on best practices for teen pregnancy prevention
- Keep funders involved through-out

## 4. Ensure buy-in and support from all levels of the community



- Support from “grass tops” is not the same as support from “grass roots”
- Don’t assume that all key leaders will be in business attire
- Get the stamp of approval

# To build capacity...



## 5. Commitment to best practices is key.

- Educate community members on what best practices are. What does the research say?
- Develop clear goals and objectives to keep everyone on track.
- Repeat: best practices, best practices, best practices.

## 6. **Customize your approach to fit the target audience.**

- Not everyone reads the newspaper.
- Technology is key.
- Go to your audience. Don't expect your audience to come to you.

**let's talk month**  
**Not Right Now Spartanburg**

## 7. Increase teen pregnancy prevention efforts by connecting with other community issues.

- Get involved
- Be an advocate for young people
- Acknowledge good work



## **8. Staff and partners should have the knowledge and skills to work with diverse communities.**

- Understand the history.
- Be careful with language.
- Remember that all individuals and groups are unique and have particular needs.

# For sustainability...



**9. Money is important but has to be coupled with the motivation and capacity to produce outcomes.**

- Money is not the answer to all of our problems!
- Potential partners should show an interest in learning and growing.
- “The road to good intentions doesn’t lead to anywhere.” *Give It Away* by Michael W. Smith

## 10. Identify teen pregnancy prevention ‘champions.’

- Get to know people.
- Title does not equal power.
- Change from the inside out can be more effective than from the outside in.



## 11. Be prepared to manage controversy.



- Acknowledge that there will be controversy.
- Have staff and partners trained to handle sensitive questions.
- Know how to talk to the media.
- Practice!

# Wrapping It Up



# References



- <sup>1</sup> Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (Winter, 2011). Collective Impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 36-41. (Model)
- <sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Community mobilization guide: A community-based effort to eliminate syphilis in the United States*. Retrieved April 25, 2014 from, <http://www.cdc.gov/stopsyphilis/toolkit/Community/CommunityGuide.pdf>
- <sup>3</sup> Jones, L. and K. Wells. 2007. Strategies for academic and clinician engagement in community-participatory partnered research. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 297, no. 4 (January 24): 407-10.



For Additional Information:

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