

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Opportunity for Funding from the National Institute for Reproductive Health: Adolescent Health Care Communication Program June 15, 2010

The National Institute for Reproductive Health (National Institute) is an innovation institute for state and local organizations working on reproductive health issues. We offer strategic guidance, hands-on support and funding to help state and local leaders remove barriers to health care, win public battles and change public policies. Together, we are helping women in communities all across the country gain access to the full range of quality reproductive health care options, the freedom to exercise their reproductive rights and the opportunity to have healthy pregnancies.

The Adolescent Health Care Communication Program Expansion Project

The National Institute's Adolescent Health Care Communication Program (AHCCP) recognizes that health care providers and teens don't always speak the same language—and that bridging this communication gap can significantly improve the delivery of clinical and preventive sexual health services to adolescents. While any efforts to inform health care providers about the unique needs of adolescents are valuable, the AHCCP believes that teenagers themselves are the population best-equipped to offer providers accurate, authentic insight into adolescent experiences, concerns and preferences relating to sexual health. Since its inception in 2003, as a project of the Teen Outreach Reproductive CHallenge (TORCH)[®] program, the AHCCP has been training teenagers to express these perspectives to providers and giving them a forum to do so. The teens' experiences with the health care community through the AHCCP, combined with their first-hand experiences as adolescents in the health care system, also put them in an ideal position to inform their peers about their health care rights and empower them to utilize providers as the invaluable resources they can be.

For five years, the AHCCP has met great success and received requests from across the country for replication. In response to this need, the National Institute expanded the AHCCP to three pilot sites across the country in July 2008. The sites chosen from fifteen proposals were Washington Hospital, Washington, PA; Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Oregon (PPSO), Eugene/Medford, OR; and Childrens Hospital, Los Angeles, CA. Due to the success of these pilot sites, the National Institute supported three additional grants the following year, which were awarded to Planned Parenthood of Southwestern Oregon (PPSO), Eugene/Medford, OR; Childrens Hospital, Los Angeles, CA; and the Boston Public Health Commission, Boston, MA. Grantees received financial support and technical assistance from the National Institute in order to implement and adapt this program at their respective organizations. To facilitate the actualization of the program, we also created an Action Kit, "Let's Talk", to guide organizations through the development and implementation of an AHCCP at their site. It was field tested at the three pilot sites from July 2008 to June 2009. The Action Kit is available online at <http://nirhealthh.org/sections/publications/documents/AHCCPpubFINAL709.pdf>. We are currently seeking proposals to fund two to three organizations interested in implementing the AHCCP during the 2010-2011 school year.

What is the AHCCP?

The two projects that compose the AHCCP employ unique but complementary strategies to reduce communication barriers between health care providers and teens. The first project, the **Adolescent-Provider Communication Workshops (APCW)**, consists of two adolescent-led workshops directed at health care providers and teens. “Keepin’ It Real With Your Doctor” is an interactive and practical presentation in which teen educators inform their peers about their health care rights—such as confidentiality, emotional support, and access to reproductive health services—and empower them to take advantage of the knowledge, advice and treatment that health care providers can offer.

Its counterpart, “Keeping It Real with Your Patients,” is directed at health care providers (including medical and nursing students, medical residents, clinic staff, etc.). With handouts, skits and group discussions, the adolescent facilitators respond to the providers’ questions and dispel misconceptions about what teens want and need at the doctor’s office. The workshop helps the providers develop stronger rapport with their adolescent patients by teaching them about the importance of confidentiality, a non-judgmental attitude and body language and speech that resonate with teens. Adolescents who feel comfortable will be more forthcoming about their risky behaviors and more receptive to their providers’ counsel, enabling providers to offer more effective care.

The second project of the AHCCP, the **Adolescent Standardized Patient Project (ASPP)**, offers providers hands-on training with teens. Since the 1970’s, standardized patients (SPs) have become an integral component of health care education, offering providers a chance to practice their interpersonal skills in an environment that safely mimics reality. In the ASPP, the teen educators role-play as adolescent “patients” struggling with issues common to teens. After performing as these characters in simulated clinical interviews, the teens offer feedback to the health care providers on their questions, body language, listening skills, explanations of confidentiality and other important forms of communication. The ASPP is used primarily in residency programs as a way to help residents entering family medicine, ob/gyn, pediatrics and/or adolescent medicine meet one of their core competency requirements, which is communication skills.

Proposal Guidelines: The National Institute is seeking proposals from institutions and organizations with pre-existing youth programs interested in developing or continuing the Adolescent Health Care Communication Program at their site.

The National Institute will select grantees based on the following criteria:

- The youth program’s commitment to expanding reproductive health information and services for youth, and to serve teens and include staff of diverse racial, gender, ethnic, sexual and socio-economic backgrounds;
- The availability of potential allies in the medical community, including at least five local residency programs and/or health care settings appropriate for the trainings in the pilot site’s vicinity;
- The geographic diversity of the youth program and its ability to cater to the needs of unique cultures and populations in the community; and
- The youth program’s fundraising potential and pre-existing resources.

Technical Assistance: In addition to financial support, the National Institute will offer assistance for the implementation of the Action Kit, as well as assistance in identifying local health care providers who would be interested in joining an Advisory Board and facilitating the implementation of the trainings in local residency programs and other health care settings. The type and amount of technical assistance provided will be based on need and the availability of existing resources.

Proposal Guidelines: The National Institute anticipates awarding 2-3 grants that will range from \$10,000 to \$15,000. Applicants should be youth programs with a focus on reproductive/sexual rights and health.

Please submit a detailed plan for launching the program, including:

- A description of the current youth program, including staff, current budget and space capacity;
- Affiliations to the medical community;
- Fundraising potential;
- An outline of the program as it will be implemented at your organization;
- Timeframe for implementation from September 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011;
- Anticipated technical assistance needs;
- Related work, if any, currently underway;
- A projected program budget; and
- The name and contact information for the primary contact for the project.

Proposals are due August 13, 2010 by COB.

Please e-mail or fax proposals to:

Pauline DeMairo

Director, Teen Outreach Reproductive CHallenge (TORCH) Program and the
Adolescent Health Care Communication Program

Email: pdemairo@nirhealth.org

Fax: 212-343-0119

For more information, or to discuss your proposal, please contact Pauline DeMairo at 212-343-0114, ext. 3517, M-T-Th from 10AM to 6PM.