



Healthy Teen Network

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES
OF TEENS AND YOUNG FAMILIES

Mapping Programs that Serve Pregnant and Parenting Teens in the US: Results and Hurdles

OVERVIEW:

Teen parenthood is seldom considered ideal; however, approximately 450,000 babies are born to teen moms in the United States each year.¹ And while teen parenting can be extremely challenging, it can also be motivating as young mothers and fathers realize what it takes to support a child in today's economy. By and large, teen parents want to do what is right for their children, but because they are teens, parents, and often poor, they need strong support networks and a comprehensive array of resources to help them parent effectively while working toward becoming self-sufficient adults.

As the only national membership organization focused on pregnant and parenting teens, Healthy Teen Network takes a keen interest in the status of this population, including legislation, policies and services that support their success. Over the past six months, Healthy Teen Network attempted to catalogue all programs serving pregnant and parenting teens in the US. Our primary purpose for undertaking this project is to create a national directory and fill a knowledge gap about what exists to support this population. A national directory of programs would provide valuable support to those working in the adolescent health community. This national directory of programs, as well as a better understanding of how states are tracking programs, would provide a snapshot of the field that would guide us in developing next steps to better serve these young people and their children.

There are many programs providing services to young parents, but they often occur at the local, rather than the state-level, and identifying what is available is challenging. What follows are the findings gathered over a six month period to assess supports and services for young families on a national scale.

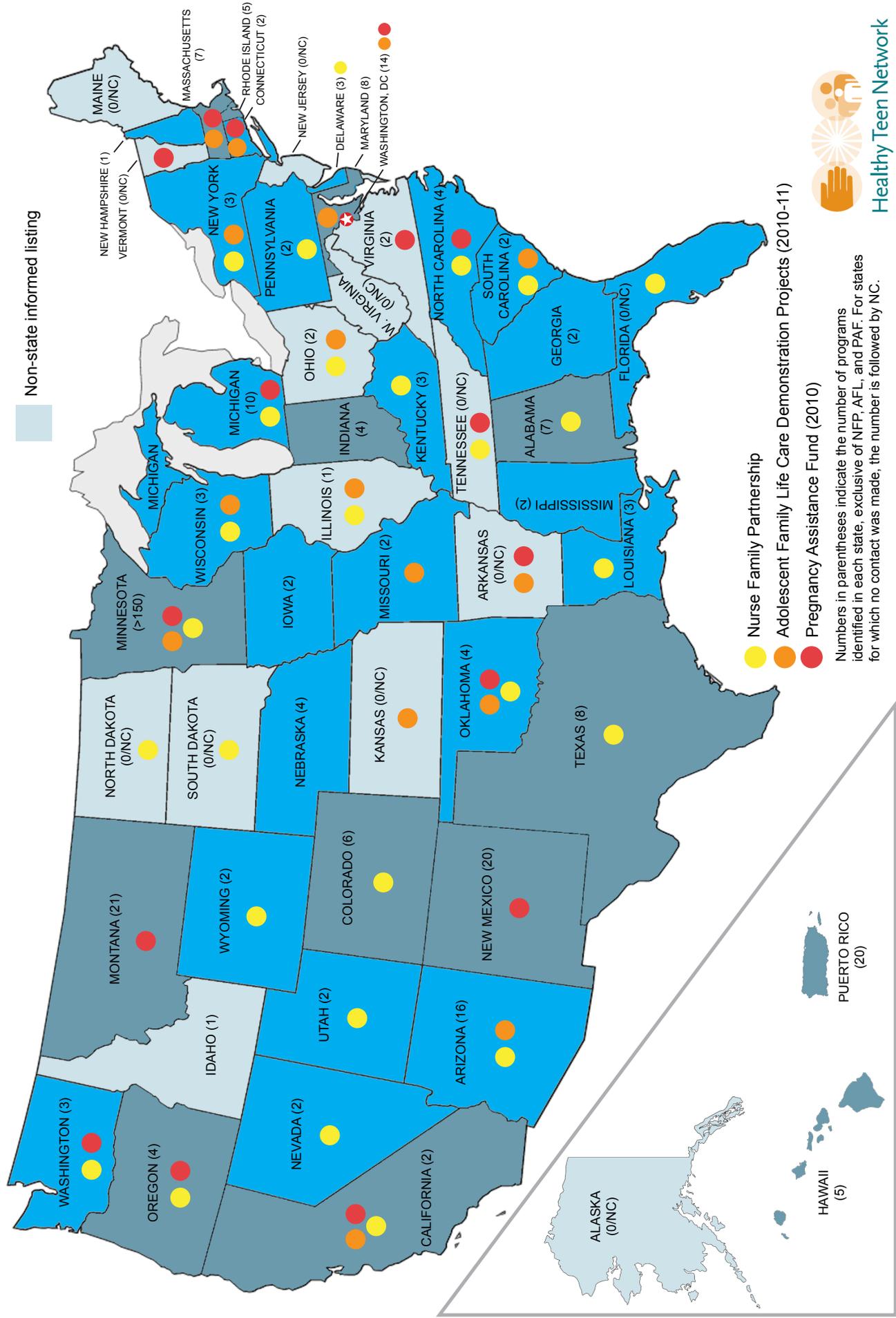
METHODS:

Step One: Identification of key informants within each state using a snowball sampling technique.

1. Contacted Executive Directors of state-level non-profit organizations or coalitions focused on teen pregnancy, parenting or prevention (n=30); many referred us to other contacts with more familiarity regarding programs serving pregnant and parenting teens within their respective states.
2. Emailed the National Network of State Adolescent Health Coordinators (NNSAHC) contacts for each state (n= 52); many referred us to people more familiar with this information.
3. Reached out to state contacts known to Healthy Teen Network through prior conferences or collaborations (n=>70).

Step Two: A survey with individual programs within states (n= 105). All program contacts were asked about funding, services offered, demographics of the population they served, and whether their programs were using evidence-based practices (these findings will be separately reported at a future date). Finally, each program contact was asked about other programs within the area or state that were also serving pregnant and parenting teens.

Programs Serving Pregnant & Parenting Teens across the US in 2011: Results of a National Scan



FINDINGS:

- Over 450 programs serving pregnant and parenting teens were identified (range 0 to >150); the majority of the states had fewer than 20 programs identified within their state.
- 16 states, as well as the District of Columbia, received Pregnancy Assistance Fund support in 2010
- 16 states, as well as the District of Columbia, received Adolescent Family Life Care Demonstration Project grants for 2010-11
- 27 states have Nurse-Family Partnership programs
- 13 states, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, currently maintain statewide directories of programs serving pregnant and parenting teens

DEFINITIONS:

The results of this search varied greatly from state to state. In some states, it was easy to identify individuals who were very familiar with programs within their states. Some of these states even maintain statewide directories of programs serving pregnant and parenting teens (Category 1). For the second category of states, we spoke to several contacts within a state, resulting in an incomplete assessment of programs (Category 2). Finally, among a small set of states, no informants were found that could identify programs within their states (Category 3).

Category 1: State-supplied listing

For these states, we were able to identify and speak with key contacts who had access to statewide directories of programs serving pregnant and parenting teens. These directories included both state and local programs. Contacts within these states emphasized the fact that these listings are never completely up to date due to constant changes within programs, but each state strove to keep their directories as up to date as possible. There are 13 states in this category, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia.

Category 2: State-informed listing

For these states, we were able to speak with contacts with some information about programs in their states, but official statewide directories do not exist. Some of these contacts were able to provide information on state run programs only, and were unfamiliar with programs run at the local level. There are 24 states in this category.

Category 3: Non-state informed listing

States in this category fall into two separate subcategories. Sub-category one includes states where we were able to speak with someone at the state-level who is involved with supporting pregnant and parenting teens, but they were unable to provide information on specific programs within the state. In this case, they attempted to connect us with people at the local level who might have more information. Sub-category two includes states where we were unable to identify or speak with a state-level contact person with information on programs supporting pregnant and parenting teens. While this was rare, any program information we did gather from these states came from individual programs and their recommendations for additional contacts. There are 13 states total in this category.

EXAMPLES:

Category 1: State-supplied listing Minnesota



Teenwise Minnesota (formally Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting) has created an extensive directory of programs serving pregnant and parenting teens. The Minnesota Adolescent Health Coordinator, who works out of the Department of Health, referred us to Teenwise Minnesota since they maintain this directory. You can search the Teenwise Minnesota directory by county, service, program name or population served. Minnesota also has a Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) program as well as Adolescent Family Life (AFL) and Pregnancy Assistance Fund (PAF) support. With two phone calls, we were able to learn about the Teenwise Minnesota directory and state-level programs supporting pregnant and parenting teens. There are over 150 programs serving pregnant and/or parenting teens in Minnesota.

Category 2: State-informed listing Oklahoma



Our original contact in Oklahoma worked at the Department of Health, within Maternal and Child Health Services. She provided us with information on a few programs she knew of within the state, but also explained that the majority of programs in rural areas are difficult to locate, and a directory of these programs does not exist. We then attempted to contact programs from the list she provided. We were able to speak with people from a few of these programs, but none were able to provide further referrals for contacts. Oklahoma also has a NFP program, as well as PAF and AFL funding. With a few emails and five phone calls, we were able to learn about the statewide NFP program as well as gain information on a few locally run programs. We identified 6 programs serving pregnant and parenting teens within Oklahoma.

Category 3: Non-state informed listing Arkansas



We attempted to contact the Adolescent Health Coordinator in Arkansas via email and phone but were not successful. The information we gathered on programs was obtained from the AFL and PAF grant listings. Arkansas is an example of a state that does not appear to have an easily located state-level contact person and yet does have strong programs supported through PAF and AFL funding. With more time, we may have been able to locate a state-level person with program information, but through email and phone we were not able to do so in the time allotted. We identified 3 programs serving pregnant and parenting teens in Arkansas.

CONCLUSIONS:

Through the process of attempting to catalogue programs for pregnant and parenting teens across the county, the great variance among states, both for numbers of programs available and their accessibility, became abundantly clear. As a result of our work with state and local organizations, we know that there are many more programs in existence than we were able to identify through our state-level search. The challenges we faced, as a national organization that focuses on this population, in identifying programs and services, leads us to the recommendations below.

A state level person or state agency responsible for tracking programs, policies and services for pregnant and parenting teens could improve outcomes for this population by:

- Increasing awareness of the population;
- Identifying resources, gaps, and needs leading to more targeted and data-informed efforts;
- Promoting/engaging in more effective advocacy; and most importantly
- Increasing access of services for pregnant and parenting teens.

Suggestions for creating a state-level coordinator:

- Expand the duties of an existing position, such as the adolescent health coordinator;
- Create a new staff position within an existing agency such as the state health department; or
- Support such a position within an existing state-level non-profit or coalition such as Teenwise Minnesota.

State-level data could be shared through a national central data repository, which could be housed within a federal agency, research institution/university, or national organization.



Pregnant and parenting teens and their children can lead productive lives, free from poverty and government dependence, but not without support. Increasing our knowledge and their access to such services is one step toward making a difference for this group.

¹ Hamilton BE, Martin JA, Ventura SJ. Births: Preliminary data for 2008. National vital statistics reports; vol 58 no 16. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Released April 6, 2010.

Healthy Teen Network

1501 St. Paul Street • Suite 124 • Baltimore, MD 21202
410.685.410

www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org