

2016 CSAC Challenge Awards Executive Summary

Being Healthy Teen Wheel Project

OVERVIEW: A culturally and linguistically tailored *Being Healthy Teen Wheel* was developed to engage and empower girls to optimize their overall health throughout the lifespan.

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE: Preconception health refers to the health of women and men during their reproductive years and focuses on getting and staying healthy throughout their lifespan. At a time when many important health behaviors are developed, it is critical to provide youth with current and accurate health information. According to the National Assessment of Adult Health Literacy, 16-18 year olds have a relatively low level of health literacy and do not necessarily take the steps to verify the credibility of online health information. The adolescent population is growing and increasingly becoming racially and ethnically diverse with minorities more likely to live in urban areas and experience poverty at a higher rate, contributing to widening health inequities. Although youth are generally healthy, mental health, substance abuse, obesity, and risky behaviors are common problems and can have long-term effects that may harm or limit opportunities later in life. Supportive relationships, a healthy community, and providing opportunities for adolescents to build knowledge and skills allow them to avoid negative health outcomes and grow into healthy adults. The challenge is integrating preconception health education and identifying how information can most effectively be incorporated into existing settings that engage youth.

SOLUTION: The Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health (MCAH) unit within the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, the Public Health Services Division, Maternal, Child, and Family Health Services branch is committed to promoting and protecting the health of pregnant women, children, families, and adolescents in San Diego County. Informed by the Life Course Perspective framework, an interactive and user-friendly *Being Healthy Teen Wheel* (BHTW) tool was developed to optimize overall health throughout the lifespan. The BHTW is a culturally and linguistically appropriate tool that increases preconception health awareness and education among girls 11-18 years of age; addresses health literacy; empowers girls to be more involved in caring for their health; and can improve or change behavior.

The BHTW is an eye-catching and interactive circular tool with two outer wheels that can be rotated to reveal information. It includes information on the following topics, including why the topic is important and tips to incorporate a healthy lifestyle: "Chew on This" (Nutrition), "Commit to be Fit" (Physical Activity), "What's Up, Doc?" (Medical and Dental Check-Ups), "Embrace You" (Self-Esteem), "Too Smart to Start" (Healthy Choices), "Body Changes" (Body Changes and Care), "Relationships" (Healthy Relationships), and "Express Yourself" (Emotions). The BHTW also includes important resources and phone numbers of local and national organizations. A

fact sheet and PowerPoint presentation was also developed for staff of community agencies to increase knowledge and assist in discussions with adolescent girls about healthy lifestyle choices.

ORIGINALITY: The BHTW is an original project. Messages were developed with input from focus groups, surveys, and stakeholders. Standardized protocols ensured appropriate dissemination and utilization of wheels.

BUDGET/COST/SAVINGS: Initial funding for the BHTW project was provided by the March of Dimes California Chapter Grant. Total budget was \$8,793. Costs associated with the project included: 1) printing approximately 8,000 BHTWs (\$7,450), 2) incentives and refreshments for focus groups (\$750), and 3) educational materials (\$593). Program staff was in-kind and no budget constraints were identified. Program staff engaged existing partners for disseminating information about the BHTW and asked the information be shared with their contacts to establish new relationships.

RESULTS: Formative research was conducted via focus groups with adolescent girls, surveys, and stakeholder input to collect feedback on the BHTW's design, cultural appropriateness, appearance, language, and readability. From September 2012 to August 2014, more than 7,500 adolescent girls received a BHTW through schools, community-based organizations, and clinics throughout San Diego County and were utilized in a variety of settings, including: group (e.g., classrooms, group sessions, health and physical education classes, after school activities, sports/recreation groups, and peer groups); one-on-one (e.g., with a counselor, medical provider, or parent/caregiver); and events (e.g., workshops, health fairs, and staff-led activities).

Evaluation surveys were developed for the target population to measure effectiveness. A total of 826 surveys were received. Respondents generally liked how the wheel looked and reported that it was clear and easy to understand. In addition, 87% reported learning new information about how to take care of themselves and said they would try to use the tips provided. Staff was also surveyed, in which all respondents agreed that the BHTW helped facilitate a discussion about healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices. Results indicate the BHTW can effectively increase knowledge about healthy lifestyle choices among girls and assist in facilitating discussion around health. It can also serve as a framework to develop new curricula/programs for girls. The BHTW is a promising practice that can be replicated in other counties and incorporated into multiple settings. MCAH has been successful in building partnerships and establishing an extensive network of collaborations, which have allowed for MCAH to sustain efforts amongst these agencies that serve adolescents and are committed to promoting preconception health.

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OPTIONAL SUBMISSION: BHTW and fact sheet.