



2017 NCSH Annual Meeting Summary

Welcome and Opening Remarks: Dr. Gail Bolan, MD, Director, Division of STD Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, gave opening remarks. She discussed trends and key issues in sexual health, applauded the coalition's many accomplishments, and was happy to share that CDC would be funding the NCSH for another five years.

NCSH Co-Director, Susan Gilbert, gave a brief overview of the coalition's activities and accomplishments since the last annual meeting. In the spring, the Communications Action Group (CAG) launched a national media campaign to promote the Spanish-version of "Take Charge of Your Sexual Health: What you need to know about preventive services" that generated up to 210 million audience impressions. The CAG also completed content for the "Five Action Steps to Good Sexual Health" that was focus group tested and is now being turned into a website. The CAG also continued to work with many leading media outlets to place stories on a variety of topics, which have produced up to one billion audience impressions since July 2013.

The Health Care Action Group (HCAG) launched "Sexual Health and Your Patients: A Provider's Guide" in October and promoted it to health care providers through NCSH members, CDC, media outreach, and outreach to priority non-member organizations. More than 30 organizations promoted the guide and its webpage has been viewed more than 5000 times. The HCAG is now developing a compendium of existing provider resources on sexual health topics that will be disseminated to providers in the next grant year. Lastly, the NCSH developed four social media campaigns, 47 issues of "Sexual Health in the News," and two issues of "News & Notes."

Keynote Presentation: Chitra Panjabi, President and CEO of SIECUS, spoke about the many challenges facing sexual health in the U.S. right now, as well existing opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels. Challenges to sexual health include threats to the Affordable Care Act and Title X funded family planning clinics, cuts to the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, proposed funding of abstinence-only programs, and lack of support for comprehensive sexuality education nationwide. At the same time, shame and stigma still surround sexuality, which can make this a difficult topic to discuss.

Despite the difficulties facing the field of sexual health, she stressed that opportunities exist. We can mobilize around important policy issues. Current widespread public action around the ACA is an excellent case in point. We can also educate voters and policy makers about the importance and value of sexual health, related services, and policies. We should ensure that our messages are inclusive reflective of peoples' lived experiences, and make 'intersectionality' a focus of our organizations.

Equipping Youth for Healthy Romantic Relationship: What Works?: This panel was designed to provide an overview of relationship education for middle school-aged youth and describe effective programs.

Debra Hauser, President, Advocates for Youth moderated this panel. The speakers were Dr. Karin Coyle, Chief Science Officer, ETR; Jen Slonaker, Vice President of Education and Organizational Development, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts; and Lisa Sohn, Program Director, Health at Futures Without Violence.

Karin Coyle began the panel with an overview of relationship education. She noted that romantic relationships are a normal part of adolescent development, often starting as early as 7th grade, and can be a positive experience. She suggested that reframing sex education around relationships, rather than

STIs or HIV, can be highly motivating for youth. This approach also addresses the important and practice relational context within which many relationships are made by youth.

She shared why relationship education for youth was important, presented data on youth relationships, and described what youth want more information about, including managing break ups, handling internal and external pressures, and navigating social media. Moving forward, it is important to address relationship quality, including how to make relationships stronger and better, build trust, get and give consent, and handle break ups.

Next, Jen Slonaker presented Get Real™, a program developed by Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts. Get Real™ is an evidence-based, comprehensive sex education program for youth in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and is LGBTQ inclusive. This unique program teaches social emotional learning skills, such as self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills.

Given that 38% of youth say their parents exert the biggest influence on their decisions about sex., Get Real™ includes extensive take-home activities for youth and the caring adult(s) in their lives. An evaluation showed that the program delayed sex among boys and girls and improved communication skills for healthy relationships. Family involvement was particularly important for boys. Boys who participated in the family activities were more likely to delay sex than those who did not.

Lastly, Lisa Sohn completed the panel by describing programs developed by Futures Without Violence that promote healthy relationships. An evaluation of Start Strong, a program for youth aged 11-14, showed youths' attitudes changed toward teen dating violence and gender equality. Students who had experienced teen dating violence saw additional benefits, such as less bullying and better communication with their parents.

Lisa also highlighted Coaching Boys Into Men a program that helps coaches promote respectful behavior among their players and prevent relationship abuse. In stressing the importance of a trauma-informed approach, she described Changing Minds, a new campaign to educate about the impact of childhood trauma and actions that can help children to heal from traumatic events.

Action Group Work Sessions: The CAG and HCAG met for 1.25 hours to work on current initiatives and discuss priorities and goals for the coming year.

- The CAG reviewed its goals, accomplishments to date, and future plans. Over the next year, the launch of the “Five Actions Steps to Good Sexual Health” through national media outreach and a promotional campaign for organizations will be the centerpiece of CAG activities. To help generate media coverage, participants broke into five small groups. Each group reviewed one step and fleshed out three to four story ideas that included core content, target audiences, potential media outlets, and possible experts for interviews. Lisa Guiterman and Susan Gilbert will summarize and share these ideas with the whole CAG and recommend story ideas for pitching to the media.
- The HCAG focused on planning for next year’s activities. The group first reviewed its past and current projects, and then discussed highlights of the coalition’s new funding requirements. Next, the group discussed proposed activities to develop and promote new provider resources to a broad range of provider organizations. The group will initially focus on completing the compendium of resources, then turn to developing pocket cards and a brief facilitator’s guide for “Sexual Health and Your Patients.” A webinar was also discussed but needs some additional consideration about format and how best to develop and market it given limited resources. The group will then promote these resources in the second half of the year.

Soft Launch of the Five Action Steps to Good Sexual Health: NCSH Co-Directors Susan Gilbert and Alyson Kristensen presented an overview of the “Five Action Steps to Good Sexual Health,” demoed the website for this content, and led a discussion on promoting the completed site.

The Five Action Steps is a long-running initiative of the CAG to develop a framework for consumers to improve their sexual health. The five action steps are:

1. Value who you are and decide what is right for you.
2. Get smart about your body and protect it
3. Treat your partners well and expect them to treat you well
4. Build positive relationships
5. Make sexual health part of your health care routine

Each step includes the benefits of taking the step, plus practical tips, advice, and resources. Draft content of Steps 1-4 was pre-tested with the public through eight focus groups in Los Angeles and Baltimore with teens and adults aged 15-54. Most identified strongly with the topics, thought the tone was positive, and believed it provided practical scenarios and suggestions. Suggestions for improvement included making the content less formal, adding more youth-relevant examples and more content on certain topics (e.g., safer sex, HIV, skin-to-skin contact), and making some content more appealing/realistic to men.

Next, the draft website was demoed. This website uses a contemporary scrolling design with significant white space. The home page features each step with a downward pointing arrow to cue users to scroll down. Each step’s webpage lists the benefits of taking the step at the top and “tips, advice, and resources” underneath. Expanders are used to compress the content for each tip. Resources will be added for each step before it is launched.

Lastly, Susan presented tentative plans for launching and promoting the Steps. The goals include: 1) create awareness of the Steps, core content and website among the public 2) encourage the public to access the website. To do so, NCSH will implement a long-term national media campaign, leverage existing media partnerships and relationships, and encourage NCSH members and non-members to promote the Steps and website. The target audience is the general public, along with specific audience segments. We plan to issue a national press release; pitch story ideas to leading media outlets, particularly those that reach priority audience segments; and develop quarterly social media campaigns.

To promote the Steps to NCSH members and other organizations, we will create an email alert with promotional copy and tools; promote the quarterly social media campaigns; and develop a slide deck for presentations. We will also explore joint promotional activities, e.g. webinars and/or presentations. The CAG will continue to brainstorm ideas, formalize a plan, and welcomes the ideas of coalition members.

Closing Remarks: Jenelle Marie Pierce, Founder of TheSTDProject.com, summed up the day in her closing remarks and thanked everyone for coming to another successful NCSH meeting.