



Middletown Connecticut Success Story 2015-2016

1. SUCCESS STORY TITLE:

**Screening At-Risk Youth for Sexual Health Needs with Follow-Up Education
Middletown, Connecticut**

2. STORY ABSTRACT:

During 2015 the district's SBHC successfully completed interviews with the majority of tenth and eleventh grade students as well as with some incoming freshman and transfer students to begin to develop communication and awareness around sexual health issues. Through these and follow-up conversations, screening of at-risk students is being completed with follow-up referrals, treatment and education as necessary

3. IDENTIFIED NEED:

Middletown, CT. is a small centrally-located city with a diverse population of almost 50,000 in 2014 with slightly over 2000 children from 0-4 years old and approximately 5000 children from 5-14 years old and 8000 individuals from 15-24 years of age. The area experiences a relatively high poverty rate with a median household income of below the state median. The community has 11 schools with over 40% of students eligible for free/reduced price meals and a minority population of almost 50%. A school-based health center (SBHC) is located in the high school.

The community faces relatively high rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. The Community Health Center has identified the district as high-need and anecdotally both teachers and school-based health center staff have identified an increase in sexual activity and related sexually transmitted diseases during the past three years. However, there has been no data information available to understand the rates of STDs among high school students nor has there been specific processes in place to ensure that students with sexual health needs are able to get those needs addressed.

4. PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:

The school district and the SBHC initiated efforts to increase communication with students, assess student understanding of the safety of sexual health activities, develop strategies to help students stay safe, and encourage screening and communication around sexual health needs. Activities were completed as part of Connecticut's Healthy School Communities for Successful Students project funded by CDC DASH between 2013 and 2016.

The APRN located at the high school SBHC began holding conversations regarding sexual health with students in grades 10-12 at the time of the annual physical and with large numbers of freshman and transfer students. At this time, a complete health history is taken including information on sexual activity, awareness of risks of sexual activity, access to sexual health services and perceptions of sexual health. In addition, when a student comes into the SBHC for any reason subsequent to the initial visit, follow-up discussions are held to obtain updates in sexual health activities and at-risk status.

Communication with students, teachers, school nurses, administrators, SBHC and guidance staff was identified as a critical component of a successful screening and education process. As a result, both formal and informal communication strategies are used to maximize the number of students from whom information is available. The APRN works closely with teachers, school nurses, social workers and principals to ensure that all parties are aware that sexual health services are available. Teachers, social workers, school nurses and administrators refer students to the APRN for testing and follow-up when a potential need is identified.

A variety of tests are available and administered to students including rapid HIV testing, pregnancy testing and testing for chlamydia and gonorrhea. HIV testing is conducted with all students who are positive for chlamydia or gonorrhea. Syphilis testing occurs as needed and is conducted by an individual from the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

5. PROGRAM/ACTIVITY OUTCOMES:

Testing and follow-up treatment and education are being provided in a consistent fashion. Data is being collected to facilitate understanding of the rates of STDs, HIV and unplanned pregnancy within the school population. Between September 1, 2014 and May 21, 2015 520 visits to the health center resulted in 60 students being screened for STD exposure and/or pregnancy with follow-up occurring as necessary.

Students and members of the school community have responded enthusiastically to the ongoing communication, testing and education process. As a result of the recent implementation of testing activities, there is no data yet available to assess changes in rates of diseases over time. It is expected that as the process continues, data will be available to assess changes in testing rates and positive tests over time.