

IKnowUShould2: A Campaign to Raise Awareness about Sexually Transmitted Infections among Youth in Philadelphia

Statement of Problem

Rates of new sexually transmitted infections (STIs), such as syphilis, chlamydia, gonorrhea and HIV, are rising among adolescents and young adults across the United States. Youth in Philadelphia, a city with high rates of poverty and a fragmented public health system, are five times more likely than youth nationwide to be diagnosed with STIs. Despite the American Academy of Pediatrics' recommendation that adolescents be routinely screened for STIs, recent studies show that few adolescents are receiving the STI and HIV testing and treatment they need.

Description

A campaign to raise awareness about sexually transmitted infections among youth in Philadelphia



Activities Coordinating Office, PI



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Youth (ages 13-24) represent **25%** of newly diagnosed HIV cases in Philadelphia, nearly all of which are **sexually transmitted**.

[IKnowUShould2](#) is a media campaign, started in 2012, targeted at Philadelphia youth ages 13-24. The campaign aims to improve adolescent knowledge and testing behaviors for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) such as gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis, and HIV. Spearheaded by the Adolescent Initiative at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), the campaign makes use of both traditional media (print advertisements, radio, hotline) and social media (website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube). PolicyLab's role is to

evaluate the campaign's success in improving STI knowledge and testing rates among Philadelphia adolescents. Evaluation will include tracking of youth contact with the campaign's social media pages as well as rates of youth STI screenings at the city's free family planning clinics before and during the campaign.

In recognition of [World AIDS Day 2016](#), the IKnowUShould2 website relaunched with an updated design informed by youth and the addition of new content on HIV prevention. New content includes information on Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP), an effective once-daily pill that prevents HIV infection recommended for people at high risk for contracting HIV. These updates were added to improve youth knowledge and awareness of this new option in the HIV prevention toolbox.

Next Steps

By determining the impact and effectiveness of the campaign in reaching and engaging the target audience and increasing STI screenings, the team will adapt the program over time to reach larger numbers of youth with the goal of disseminating the campaign as a national model.

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Suggested Citation

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PolicyLab Leads

Nadia Dowshen MD, MSHP

Faculty Member

Nadia Dowshen (she/her) is a faculty member at PolicyLab at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and serves as Director of Adolescent HIV Services in the Craig Dalsimer Division of Adolescent Medicine at CHOP. She is also an associate professor of pediatrics and the Associate Director of the Masters of Health Policy Research at the Perelman School of Medicine at University of Pennsylvania and a Stoneleigh fellow.

In addition to specialized care for youth living with HIV/AIDS, Dr. Dowshen also provides general adolescent medical care at CHOP and Covenant House, PA, a youth shelter located in Philadelphia. She recently co-founded the CHOP Sexuality and Gender Development Clinic which now provides medical and psychosocial support to more than 2,000 gender variant children and adolescents. Dr. Dowshen's research

focuses on using youth-friendly technology to improve adherence to antiretroviral therapy and improve other health outcomes for adolescents living with HIV/AIDS. She is also interested more broadly in research around issues of STD and HIV prevention and treatment as well as achieving health equity for other marginalized youth including LGBT and homeless adolescents.

Dr. Dowshen received the 2010 Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine New Investigator Award for her research identifying protective factors against HIV infection among transgender youth. She was recently named an NIH Adolescent Trials Network (ATN) Scholar and a Best Young Investigator by the National Centers for AIDS Research (CFAR). Dr. Dowshen also serves on the Board of Directors of the Sexual Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), a national non-profit which promotes comprehensive education about sexuality, and advocates for the right of individuals to make responsible sexual choices. Dr. Dowshen received both her M.D. and Masters of Science in Health Policy Research from the University of Pennsylvania.



Nadia Dowshen
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Team

Cynthia Mollen MD, MSCE

Faculty Director of Affiliate Trainee Program

Additionally, Dr. Mollen is a professor of pediatrics at the Perelman School Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, core faculty leader for the Qualitative Research Core at CHOP, faculty leader for the Qualitative Methods Research Affinity Group, and a practicing pediatric emergency medicine physician at CHOP. Dr. Mollen completed both her pediatrics residency and pediatric emergency medicine fellowship at CHOP and became a faculty member upon completing her training in 2001. She also completed the Master of Science in Clinical Epidemiology during her fellowship.

Since joining the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania and CHOP, Dr. Mollen has developed and refined a research and clinical interest in adolescent health, with a particular focus on utilizing the emergency department and non-primary care settings as sites for interventions related to major public health issues affecting adolescents, such as unintended teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. She has also pursued training in qualitative research methods and has utilized those methods in a variety of research projects. Dr. Mollen's projects have included interviewing adolescents to learn about their attitudes about developing an intervention aimed to improve the use of emergency contraception; exploring minority adolescents' perception about bias when seeking family planning care; assessing the decision-making processes of parents with terminally ill children; and improving access to expedited partner therapy for adolescents.



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Marné Castillo

PhD, MEd

Faculty Scholar

Marné Castillo (she/her) is a faculty scholar at PolicyLab and serves as the clinical and research director of the Adolescent Initiative, a multi-disciplinary program for HIV prevention, care, education and research at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP).

Dr. Castillo is the principal investigator for CHOP's Adolescent Trials Unit, which is supported by the National Institutes of Health in addition to several other multi-site studies. From 2002 to 2017, she led the "Connect to Protect Project," the Adolescent Trials Network community-based prevention research study focusing on community mobilization and HIV primary prevention.

Dr. Castillo's work focuses on adolescent health promotion and community engagement in research, especially with the House and Ball and Kiki communities. She also has broader interests around social determinants of health, with a special interest in trauma and improving outcomes for marginalized adolescents. In 2015, Dr. Castillo received the Center for AIDS Research Red Ribbon Award recognizing her work on behalf of adolescents in the field HIV prevention research in Philadelphia. She has served on the Board of Directors of several organizations, including Philadelphia FIGHT and GALAEI. Dr. Castillo received her PhD in public health and her master's degree in education from Temple University.



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Related Tools & Publications

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[IknowUshould2: Feasibility of a Youth-Driven Social Media Campaign to Promote STI and HIV Testing Among Adolescents in Philadelphia](#)
[Article](#)

Jan 2015

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[Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Gender Non-Conforming Children and Adolescents](#)
[Evidence to Action Briefs](#)

Dec 2015

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[Addressing Sexually Transmitted Infections in Pediatrics](#)
[Research at a Glance](#)

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