



Healthy Teen Network

**CELEBRATING 40 YEARS  
OF #STANDINGSTRONG**



A web version of this report with links to relevant sources is available at  
[www.HealthyTeenNetwork/annual-report.org](http://www.HealthyTeenNetwork/annual-report.org).

# About Healthy Teen Network

Founded in 1979, Healthy Teen Network fosters a national community where all adolescents and young adults, including youth who are pregnant or parenting, are supported and empowered to thrive. Located in Baltimore, Maryland, we serve as a leading national membership organization (501c3) for adolescent health professionals and organizations, promoting a unique and holistic perspective—we call it Youth 360°—to improve the health and well-being of young people.

## Vision

Healthy Teen Network envisions a world where all adolescents and young adults lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

## Mission

Healthy Teen Network promotes better outcomes for adolescents and young adults by advancing social change, cultivating innovation, and strengthening youth-supporting professionals and organizations.

## Our Guiding Principles

**Rights:** A more just and equitable world supports and empowers all adolescents and young adults—including young people who are pregnant or parenting—to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

**Individuality:** All adolescents and young adults, including young people who are pregnant and parenting, deserve respect, appreciation, and acceptance for their unique strengths, talents, and potential.

**Youth Centered:** Youth-centered strategies and approaches are critical to empower young people.

**Youth 360°:** How and where youth live, learn, and play matters...and needs to be addressed to achieve better outcomes.

**Evidence:** Evidence-based strategies and approaches are effective and efficient ways to achieve positive outcomes.

**Innovation:** Innovation is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy to respond to the dynamic lives of adolescents and young adults.

**Access:** All adolescents and young adults have a right to comprehensive, developmentally and culturally appropriate, confidential support and services, including contraceptive services, and if pregnant, to full options counseling and services.

# Letter from the President & CEO



**James B. Smith, PhD**  
*President & CEO*

Healthy Teen Network is celebrating 40 years of promoting better outcomes for adolescents and young adults. I feel fortunate to have joined Healthy Teen Network during this milestone year. Over the past 40 years, many Board members, staff, professional members, and donors have contributed to our successes. Like so many of us who give our time and resources to mission-driven work, I am passionate about making the world a better place for all of us to live, learn, and grow. I've already been so inspired by Healthy Teen Network's accomplishments, and I look forward to all that we can do together to build on our progress and ensure that all young people may thrive.

This annual report celebrates our more recent accomplishments, but I'd also like to take a moment to reflect on our first 40 years and all there is to celebrate.

## REFLECTING BACK ON OUR FIRST 40 YEARS

### We strengthen professionals.

As a membership organization, we understand the importance of being both responsive to the needs of youth-supporting professionals, as well as serving as a visionary that leads our members to the next advancement. We are the go-to trainer and resource hub because our members know we work collaboratively to meet their needs and build their skills. This is so important because we know when professionals are better prepared, we see increased positive outcomes for young people. Capacity building has always been the heart of our mission, and we will continue ensuring our members have the skills and information they need to provide quality sexual health education and services.

### We stand with all young people.

We have been the voice for inclusion because all young people, including those who may be pregnant or parenting, have a right to respect. From day one, when we were founded in 1979 as the National Organization for Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting (NOAPP), we have not only affirmed but often been the lone voice standing with young families. And we've continued to push the field to embrace sexual and reproductive health as a social justice issue with public health impacts. Over the decades, we've built on our legacy of standing with all young people, such as youth in foster care or LGBTQ+ youth, and moved beyond prevention in support of health promotion. We continue #StandingStrong because all young people have a right to a healthy future.

### We lead in evidence & innovation.

We have led the field in using evidence and innovation to support and empower young people. Over the past 40 years, we have honed our approach, using lessons learned and evaluation results, to continuously improve and deliver the most effective training and resources to support high quality, evidence-based, and innovative programs and services for youth. No matter the political climate, we champion evidence over ideology because young people have a right to quality sexual health education and services. Today, we have a wealth of research to inform how we can best achieve our goals, and we're continuing to build on the evidence with new innovations, grounded in research, to meet the dynamic needs of young people and improve outcomes.

We have reason to celebrate, and we're not done yet. What's next for Healthy Teen Network? Well, we will continue with our successes, first and foremost, but we know we must continue to grow and push forward, both ourselves as an organization, as well the visionary leader for our members.

## LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR NEXT 40 YEARS

### We must be holistic in our approach, addressing social determinants of health.

We call this holistic approach Youth 360°, and while it may not be a new concept, it continues to gain traction in our field. Since 2013, we have been leading the field in integrating a Youth 360° approach to address health disparities and achieve equity. This will not change, but we need more of it. Our members need us to continue helping them make these systemic changes in their organizations and communities, to establish new and diverse partnerships, and to leverage each other's resources to better meet the many different needs of all young people.

### We must leverage technology & innovation to improve access.

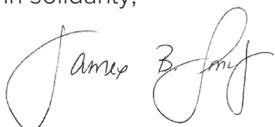
Technology opens doors and has the potential to expand access exponentially. "mHealth" may include apps to access reliable information, online games that serve as sex ed programs, telephone services to provide consultations from healthcare providers, or prescriptions by mail. We already have many initiatives leveraging technology to improve access, such as Crush, the first and only smartphone-based digital tool proven effective at increasing young women's sense of control to make decisions regarding their sexual behavior. And we're helping our members to do the same, through capacity-building events, such as the Design Challenge at our conference. We are continuing this important work, using human-centered design thinking and rapid prototyping to develop creative solutions that can be implemented today to ensure every young person has improved access to quality sexual health education and services.

### We must support & empower all young people to thrive.

Our legacy, since our foundation in 1979, is #StandingStrong with all young people. Our nation's young people face more and more adversity in today's increasingly hostile political climate. The rights of LGBTQ+ youth are under attack. Young people who may be undocumented face uncertainty every day. Youth involved in systems of care, such as foster care or juvenile justice systems, face challenges accessing quality, consistent health care and sexual health education. We will continue our efforts to ensure all young people are included, and never stigmatized, in all our efforts.

Thank you to all of our supporters who have been a part of our accomplishments. Please join us in our ongoing efforts to support and empower all young people to thrive ([www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org/donate](http://www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org/donate)).

In solidarity,



James B. Smith, PhD  
President & CEO

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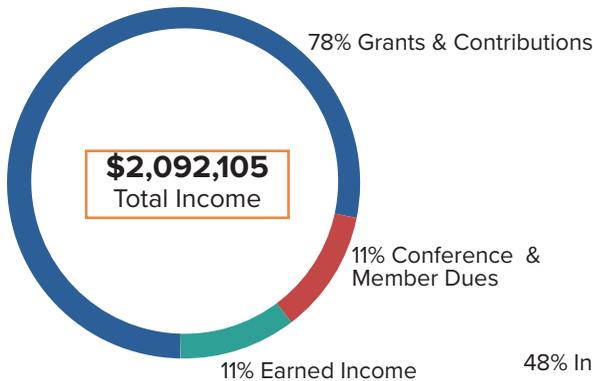
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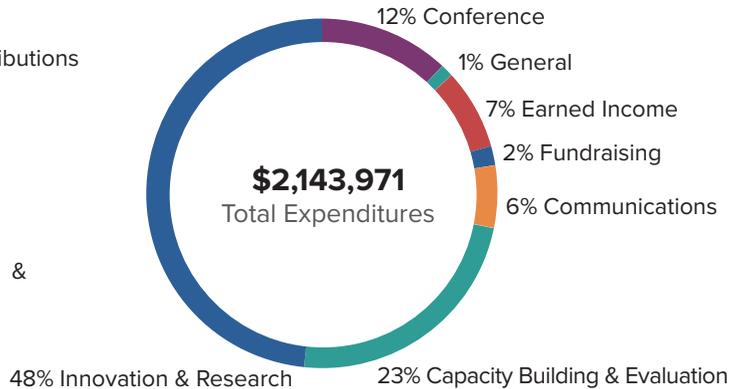
# Fiscal Year 2019 Financial Data\*

\*unaudited

Sources of Income



Expenditures by Program Area



## Thank You for #StandingStrong!

*To our supporters and donors, we thank you for your generous and continued ongoing support of Healthy Teen Network. Our important work with young people continues due to people like you.*

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By 2020, Healthy Teen Network will work in all 50 states, US territories, and the District of Columbia to build the capacity of youth-supporting professionals to empower young people to thrive.

# 2017-2020 Strategic Plan

Healthy Teen Network believes that adolescent sexual and reproductive health is a social justice issue with public health impacts. These impacts are confounded by how and where youth live, learn, and play and require a holistic Youth 360<sup>o</sup> approach to achieve equity.

## Goal 1

Advance integration of a holistic approach to adolescent sexual & reproductive health programs & services.

We will build the capacity of professionals & organizations to:

1. Adopt a holistic approach & integrate the social determinants of health into their work.
2. Broaden their scope by building partnerships & collaborate beyond the field of adolescent sexual & reproductive health.
3. Ensure that they are inclusive of all young people, especially young families.

## Goal 2

Lead the use of innovation & evidence to support & empower young people to thrive.

We will:

1. Incorporate both innovation & evidence in our work.
2. Develop solutions that are responsive to peoples' needs using a human-centered approach.
3. Build the capacity of youth-supporting professionals & organizations to incorporate innovation & evidence into their work.

## Goal 3

Promote & advance adolescent sexual & reproductive health as critical to the well-being of our nation.

We will advocate to:

1. Maintain a spotlight on adolescent sexual & reproductive health.
2. Promote understanding of the interplay of the environment & individuals on sexual & reproductive health outcomes.
3. Build the capacity of youth-supporting professionals and organizations to use effective messages and delivery strategies to mobilize diverse audiences to promote adolescent health.



# Sharing Our Progress

We track our capacity-building assistance across the nation and categorize the level of assistance as high, moderate, or low, based on the type of activity(ies) received or attended.

We are committed to our 2017-2020 Strategic Plan and our promise to our members and funders to continue this important work. This annual report includes highlights of our progress in the 2019 fiscal year (October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019).





# Goal 1

Advance  
integration  
of a holistic  
approach to  
adolescent sexual  
& reproductive  
health programs &  
services.



## How & Where We Live, Learn, & Play Matters

What determines how long we live...if we thrive... how healthy we are? Is it...what we do...who we are...where we live...our families?

We cannot expect to significantly impact health outcomes and address health disparities without considering the critical factors, or social determinants of health, that shape our well-being.

Healthy Teen Network developed Youth 360° to make it easier to talk about and understand the intersection of the social determinants of health and social-ecological theory, and how each of us is affected by factors at an individual level, but also through our relationships and communities, and in society as a whole. Youth 360° is more than just a messaging tool; it is a way to approach systems-based change to respond to the dynamic lives of young people.

We must address a wide range of factors—such as access to quality education and health services, socioeconomic status, or having life goals and aspirations—that can influence health outcomes.

**Youth 360° is our commitment to address health disparities and reach all young people, including marginalized youth populations, such as youth in out-of-home-care, system-involved youth, runaway/homeless youth, LGBTQ+ youth, and youth who are pregnant or parenting.**

Each year, we ask our members to report their familiarity with and integration of the Youth 360°. Over time, we've found that we have indeed been

successful in reaching our first strategic plan goal to adopt this holistic approach and integrate the social determinants of health into their work. They are working to broaden their scope by building partnerships and collaborating beyond the field of adolescent sexual and reproductive health and ensuring that they are inclusive of all young people, especially young families.

Twenty-three percent of our members are very familiar, and 44% are somewhat familiar with a holistic health promotion approach to integrate the social determinants of health. Fifty-eight percent of our members reported that their organizations are integrating social determinants in their work.

We've been able to increase our reach and promote integration of a holistic approach to adolescent sexual and reproductive health through our varied level of capacity-building assistance (see map, Figure 1). Each year, we assess our members, and they have shared with us that our capacity building has enabled them to:

- Conduct their own trainings,
- Select effective curricula,
- Build their organizational capacity,
- Sustain evidence-based programs,
- Build teacher competencies to deliver sex ed,
- Implement curricula with fidelity,
- Build student satisfaction with curricula,
- Create and modify training designs,
- Develop capacity-building strategies,
- Set and meet goals,
- Create public service announcements,
- Work with stakeholders, and
- Gain insights.

## Engaging Young Men

When it comes to adolescent parenting, too often young fathers are left out of the conversation. We partnered with the Baltimore City Health Department to design and conduct an assessment of organizations serving young people who are pregnant or parenting, in order to learn more about how these organizations include young fathers. From this assessment, over the next year, we will be working with the city to make recommendations and provide the necessary training and support to help improve efforts to engage and include young fathers.

**Research demonstrates that providing supports and services to young parents—including young fathers—is critical in helping them to complete their educations, achieve financial stability, and nurture the positive development of their children. But to reach young fathers, these services must be appealing and tailored to meet their needs, or else they will never make it in the door, let alone reap the benefits of the services.**

## Collaborating to Improve Sex Ed

Engaging school and community partners is critical to improving sexual health education and services. In any given community, there are many different programs and services working with young people, but too often, these diverse agencies do not collaborate in their common goal of improving adolescent health. However, when these agencies do communicate and collaborate, they can leverage limited funding to improve outcomes and serve more youth.

Since 2009, we have been partners with Baltimore City to improve adolescent sexual and reproductive health outcomes. Dating back to the 2009 strategic plan, an effort led by Healthy Teen Network, Baltimore City launched U Choose, which has been funded in part by the federal Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. The initiative brings together various city agencies, united in a common goal to improve health outcomes for city residents. Healthy Teen Network has been a critical partner of this initiative since its inception. In 2019, we developed two new elearning resources and delivered 16 customized presentations to facilitators, educators, and clinic staff, building their capacity to deliver quality sexual health education and services. Through these partners, the U Choose project reached 10,031 youth in three settings (middle schools, high schools, and clinics), exceeding the annual goal of 10,000 youth.

**In our capacity-building role on this project, we provide the training and resources professionals need, so that they are better prepared and able to provide Baltimore City adolescents with quality, youth-friendly sexual health education and clinical services to support and empower them to lead healthy, sexual lives.**



## 20 Questions to a Healthy Future

Volt20 is the ultimate health resource guide every young person needs to help them thrive, holistically. Volt20 helps adolescents and young adults focus on what's going on with their bodies, minds, relationships, and the places they live, learn, work, and play, and in doing so, truly embodies the Youth 360° approach.

Youth and young adults start their healthy future plans by answering 20 health questions. These questions encourage them to think about their lives, decide what they like about their lives right now, consider what they wish was different, and plan for a healthy future. After selecting the health issues that concern them the most, they can learn how to start making significant changes.

The power of Volt20 lies in its versatility: young people can complete the survey and read the youth guide by themselves, or they can enlist the support of an adult caregiver, teacher, or counselor. Caring adults have their own facilitator guide, which provides information on each health topic and also offers tips on how to talk to young people about engaging in healthy behaviors.

An evaluation of Volt20 with 142 diverse youth, ages 14 to 24, showed that young people and caring adults alike were very satisfied with Volt20. Overall, young people found the content approachable and informative. Caring adults appreciated the tools to help them engage in a conversation about life goals and healthy behavior with young people.

**“Having a plan” or hopes and dreams for the future, such as high school graduation, secondary or vocational graduation, mental health and well-being, or sexual and reproductive health, is an incredibly relevant protective factor for a wide range of adolescent outcomes. Volt20 helps young people create a written “game plan” for establishing, maintaining, and sustaining a life of health and well-being.**



# Goal 2

**Lead the use  
of evidence  
& innovation  
to support &  
empower young  
people to thrive.**

# Bridging the Gap in LGBTQ+ Healthcare Access

Every person deserves access to care that is responsive and respectful of their needs. We have been working to develop PrideDoc to link LGBTQ+ individuals with LGBTQ+-friendly healthcare providers in their communities, in an attempt to improve access to responsive and respectful health services. While PrideDoc is not yet available for the public, it is in process; in 2019, we developed a prototype and tested a mobile-based database. PrideDoc will use a Yelp-like portal for users to:

- Locate LGBTQ+-friendly healthcare providers within a specified location radius;
- Read others' reviews of providers and assessments of quality of care and LGBTQ+-friendliness;
- Add providers to the PrideDoc directory; and
- Post reviews of providers and assessments of quality of care and LGBTQ+-friendliness.

PrideDoc will address a critical gap in LGBTQ+ healthcare access. While nationwide LGBTQ+-friendly provider directories exist, they are typically populated by provider opt-ins and thus produce limited, if any, recommendations, outside of major metropolitan centers. Even in metro areas, where LGBTQ+-friendly providers are more prevalent, LGBTQ+ individuals often have no guidance on which providers offer high quality services.

**A user-generated directory centered on reviews of providers and assessments of quality of care and LGBTQ+-friendliness will be better equipped to provide more information with more nuance. With this increased access to quality care, LGBTQ+ youth can be supported and empowered to lead healthy and fulfilling lives.**



**POWER**  
THROUGH  
*Choices*

## Proven Effective

*Power Through Choices* is the only proven effective sexual health program designed with and for youth in systems of care. After years of supporting their efforts and providing training and technical assistance, Healthy Teen Network acquired the evidence-based program from the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy.

In 2019, we updated the curriculum (4th ed.), making language more gender-inclusive, clarifying instructions, adding activities and resources, and ensuring content is up-to-date and medically accurate. We also developed a training-of-trainers (TOT) to prepare experienced trainers to conduct a Training-of-Facilitators, where health educators are prepared to implement the curriculum with youth. TOTs are a great way to support long-term sustainability because trainers will be ready to train teams of health educators.

**Through our trainings, more young people can receive this proven effective program. As part of the programs randomized control trial, youth receiving the *Power Through Choices* curriculum reported statistically significant impacts in numerous areas on a 12-month post-program survey: participants reported lower rates of sexual activity, were less likely to be involved in a pregnancy, and were less likely to report having sex without birth control.**



## Breaking Down Science with Humor

Vaccines are an important healthcare issue, particularly when they can prevent serious conditions, such as cervical cancer. We know from years of testing that the HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine is very safe, and it is effective at preventing HPV and HPV-related cancers. The CDC has determined the benefits of HPV vaccination, such as prevention of cancer, far outweigh the risks of possible side effects.

Unfortunately, there are myths and misinformation that can dissuade people from getting the vaccine. We had the challenge of developing an educational yet entertaining campaign to increase HPV vaccination. First, we narrowed our focus by identifying two key audiences: young adults, and parents of children 9-15 years old.

In order to create resources that resonated with these audiences, we conducted digital focus groups using Facebook to learn more about these groups' beliefs and ideas about the HPV vaccine. We explored why young adults have not received

the vaccine, why parents might not want their child to receive the vaccine, and which health messages would move them into action. Combined with our background literature review, these findings informed the videos and infographics we created. Next, we hired an incredible creative animator, Blue Seat Studios, who worked closely with us to translate our health messages into humorous scripts.

Through this human-centered design process, we created [two videos \(available in English and Spanish\)](#) and [two infographics](#), one for each audience.

**When people have accurate and accessible resources, such as these videos and graphics, to break down the benefits and address potential concerns in humorous ways using plain language, they can learn the facts and make educated decisions that will support more positive health outcomes.**



## Leading with Innovation

Innovation is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy to respond to the dynamic lives of adolescents and young adults. But innovation can be hard...it can be expensive and time-intensive, not to mention a daunting task to take on. And yet, we cannot rely on the same list of programs, some developed and tested decades ago, to meet the needs of today's young people. We have to develop programs and services for today's youth, for today's changing world.

But how? How do we use innovative practices or develop innovative programs? As a capacity-building organization, we support professionals and organizations in developing innovative solutions that are responsive to young people's needs (or use a human-centered approach). Design challenges support rapid, inexpensive innovation to address public health challenges. Design challenges provide an opportunity to develop multi-sectoral partnerships and bring together people who are passionate about innovation or are interested in learning more about a particular topic. Diverse teams then collaborate to design a prototype solution focused on a goal.

In the first [Healthy Teen Network design challenge](#), held in October at our annual national conference, in partnership with youth + tech + health (YTH), we called for a new commitment to sex positivity and asked,

*How might we center pleasure in adolescent sex ed to foster authentic conversations about sexuality and promote positive sexual experiences?*

Using the human-centered design process, participants developed rapid, innovative solutions to center pleasure in sex ed. A diverse panel of judges, consisting of funders, sex educators, and youth assessed the solutions for creativity, application of design thinking, responsiveness to the question, feasibility, and youth-friendliness.

Through this energizing and informative activity, both participants and our conference attendees saw practical examples that used the human-centered design process to create innovative solutions centering pleasure in sex education.

**With all the focus on rigorous evaluation and evidence-based programs in our field, it can be hard to see how to bring in new ideas that embrace today's opportunities and advances—but design challenges not only provide practical examples but also the training to take the process back to office. And when we combine evidence and innovation, we are better able to meet the dynamic needs of young people and offer relevant education and services.**



# Goal 3

**Promote & advance  
adolescent sexual &  
reproductive health  
as critical to the  
well-being of our  
nation.**

# Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education

We've been actively engaged with other national agencies focused on adolescent sexual and reproductive health to remain vigilant and effective in our advocacy to protect evidence-based, medically accurate, inclusive programs and services for all young people. We continue to serve as a key member of the Sex Ed Collaborative, a collective of 17 national, regional, and state-based organizations with extensive experience training educators to deliver school-based sex education. The Sex Ed Collaborative aims to ensure that all young people receive sex education that is evidence-informed and rights-based and that schools and communities are fully supported and equipped to deliver school-based sex education in grades K–12.

Have you ever wondered why we have student standards for sex education in schools, guidance for pre-service teachers, but no standards to help existing sex education teachers become more effective? We wondered that too, and that's why the Sex Ed Collaborative decided to address this gap. Together, the Collaborative created the Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education

to offer clear guidance about what teachers should know and be able to do to implement effective sex education, no matter what curriculum or set of lesson plans they deliver. Our focus was on core skills across four domains:

1. Context for Sex Education (communicating the value of sex education)
2. Professional Disposition (values, bias, and disclosure)
3. Best Practices for Sex Education (racial and reproductive justice, inclusive and affirming environments, teaching strategies, and responding to questions)
4. Key content areas (healthy relationships, consent, identities, contraception, STIs, etc.)

**These standards can help ensure our sex education teachers provide quality sex ed that is medically accurate and inclusive of all young people, so that all young people are supported and empowered to thrive.**



## #StandingStrong

In 2019, we continued to see many setbacks for adolescent sexual and reproductive health, particularly at the federal level. However, these attacks on the rights of all young people have only served to help our field be more collaborative and more determined than ever in #StandingStrong and keeping youth at the center of all we do.

We consistently provided our members with timely policy alerts and updates in what was yet another tumultuous year of many, and often controversial, appointments, funding announcements, budget proposals, and legislative initiatives. Our updates ensured our members received accurate information relevant to their advocacy efforts for adolescent sexual and reproductive health.

We joined collaborative advocacy efforts, such as supporting SIECUS and the #SRAisabstinenceonly campaign, to continue to educate policymakers and the public that even though harmful abstinence-only programs have attempted to rebrand themselves

as sexual risk avoidance, or SRA, they are the same ineffective, inaccurate, and shaming programs as before. These lessons do nothing but harm young people by reinforcing harmful ideology and stifling honest discussion about sexuality. Students need quality sex education that teaches them real information and skills they need to prevent unintended pregnancy, HIV, and STIs. They need to learn about contraception, condoms, healthy relationships, and more. And they don't need stigma and shame to ever be part of their school day.

Unfortunately, these programs have received over \$2.2 billion in federal funding to date, so we know we must continue in our efforts to **ensure that all young people receive quality sex education that teaches them the real, complete, and accurate information and skills they need to ensure their sexual health and well-being.**

## Why “Sex Ed for All”? Because it’s a human right.

In May 2019, Healthy Teen Network joined a collaborative of reproductive health and rights groups dedicated to improving sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice for all, to launch May as Sex Ed for All Month: Accessing Power, Information, and Rights. Sex Ed for All Month replaced Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month and focused on working towards all young people having the power and right to access the education and health care they need to achieve the best positive outcomes for themselves.

While existing federal funding for evidence-based sexual health education is critical, it cannot meet the national need. Too many young people go without the sexual health information and access to the care they not only need, but have a right to receive. The launch of Sex Ed for All Month is timely as key sexual health legislation was introduced during the month. The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act (REHYA) and the Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act (YASHS) will help ensure all young people receive high-quality, culturally competent sexual health information and access to the care they need.

Healthy Teen Network firmly believes that our society has a responsibility to support and empower young people to lead healthy lives, and that includes sexual lives. We cannot allow ideology to obscure science or ostracize entire populations of young people. We cannot just talk about pregnancy or disease. Our young people need sex-positive, high quality sex ed and access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health care, and they need it now.

**Sex Ed for All is a collaborative effort to help young people in marginalized communities, including communities of color, LGBTQ+ young people, immigrants, those with lower incomes, those living in rural areas, and those in foster care have access to the information and care they need to ensure their lifelong sexual and reproductive health.**

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Healthy Teen Network

1501 Saint Paul Street, Suite 114  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
[www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org](http://www.HealthyTeenNetwork.org)