

## **Lucas County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative Written Testimony on HB 293**

*"Slogans that teach young people to "say no" to drugs and sex have a nice ring to them. But... they are as effective in prevention of adolescent pregnancy and drug abuse as the saying "Have a nice day" is in preventing clinical depression."*

*Dr. Michael A. Carrera*

We are committed to reducing the teen birth rate in our community. Lucas County has led the state's urban counties 13 of the last 20 years in their teen birth rates. Approximately 800 babies are born to teen mothers in Lucas County annually. That is equal to 40 kindergarten classrooms every year in just one county. It is estimated that at any one time there are over 13,000 youth in our community who were born to teen parents.

Teen pregnancy carries a high social and economical price tag for the teen, society as a whole, and most importantly the child of the teen mother. Most of these children start life at a serious disadvantage and are at risk to repeat the cycle themselves. While teen births bring a financial cost to the County, projected at \$1,206,044 annually, our primary motivation is the recognition of the impact of teen pregnancy upon the parents and children related to "quality of life" issues, overall well-being, and ability to succeed and contribute within their community.

Teen births are a primary reason teens do not complete their education. This lack of education further compounds the troubles these teens face. They will be unemployed or underemployed relying on the state to assist them with their lives. In Ohio (2004) tax payers costs associated with children born to teen mothers included: \$67 million for public health care (Medicaid and SCHIP); \$92 million for child welfare; \$90 million for incarceration; and \$104 million in lost tax revenue, due to decreased earning and spending.

We are working together to reduce the Lucas County teen birth rate by investing in a continuum of comprehensive programs that have been proven to be effective. Our core partners include the Lucas County Board of Commissioners, Lucas County Department of Job & Family Services, Lucas County Family and Children First Council, Toledo Public Schools, United Way of Greater Toledo, The YWCA of Greater Toledo, and the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department.

Lucas County embarked on strategic plan to reduce the teen birth rate within our community. The programs implemented and geographic locations were determined through both the analysis of local planning data and a review of current research on effective programming for youth. The findings of the Lucas County Family Council's Data and Evaluation Network's Analysis of Teen Pregnancy Issues were key in shaping the services being requested. The analysis identifies both the service needs and the geographic areas where youth are at the most significant risk. See Teen pregnancy Report: [http://www.co.lucas.oh.us/documents/Family%20Council/DEN\\_Teen\\_Pregnancy\\_Report%5B1%5D.PDF](http://www.co.lucas.oh.us/documents/Family%20Council/DEN_Teen_Pregnancy_Report%5B1%5D.PDF))

Section 3313.6011 of HB 293 identifies educational components that need to be addressed in sexuality education. The Lucas County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative is currently implementing curriculum locally that addresses all components set forth in the proposed legislation. The comprehensive curricula "*Reducing the Risk*", "*Draw the Line/Respect the Line*" are taught by trained facilitators within the Toledo Public School health classes at the middle

and high school levels. The Teen Outreach Program is conducted for high school students after school in the four areas of the city with the highest teen birth rates, also by trained facilitators.


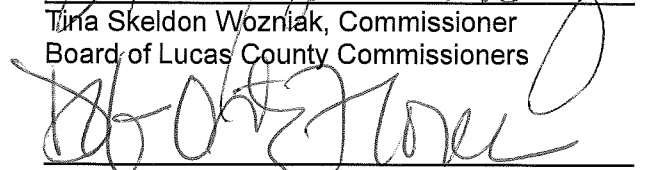
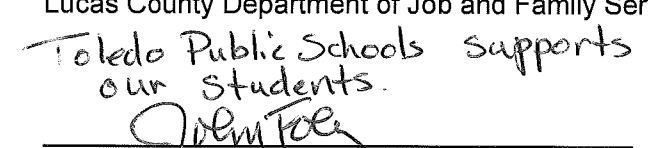

This program is currently in its third year and evaluation results have been favorable. Some "Reducing the Risk" evaluation findings include:

- At the completion of the curriculum, regardless of gender or ethnicity, students had improved parental involvement scores, suggesting that the curriculum was successful in improving parental involvement for all students. These results suggest that the curriculum was successful in reaching out to parents and fostering communication about the topics covered within the curriculum.
- Students had significantly increased their knowledge about pregnancy, STD transmission, and birth control
- High school and middle school students reported increases in self-efficacy, a student's belief that he or she would be able to say "no" to sex in the future, due to the curriculum.

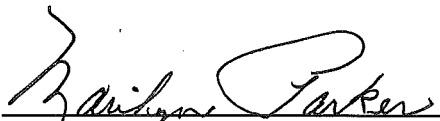
Evaluation results from the Teen Outreach Program (TOP) show that TOP students attended school more regularly, were less likely to drop out of school, and performed better in school across all academic subjects. Additionally, TOP students have returned to the community approximately 4000 hours of direct community service.

Additional prevention efforts are also occurring in Lucas County. These include Plain Talk (North Toledo) and The Children's Aid Society Carrera Model Program (East Toledo) in Lucas County. These sectors of our community have consistently had the highest rate of teen births. These models were chosen because of their effectiveness in teen pregnancy prevention. Funding is also provided by LCJFS for The Polly Fox Academy, a school for pregnant and parenting teens.

**The Lucas County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative endorses passage of this legislation.**

 _____ Tina Skeldon Wozniak, Commissioner Board of Lucas County Commissioners	11.17.09 _____ Date
 _____ Deborah Ortiz, Director Lucas County Department of Job and Family Services	11-17-09 _____ Date
Toledo Public Schools supports reducing the risk programs for our students.	
 _____ John Foley, Superintendent Toledo Public Schools	11-17-09 _____ Date
 _____ John Trunk, Chairperson Lucas County Family and Children First Council	11-17-09 _____ Date

Lucas County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative



Marilyn Parker, Chairperson  
Partners for Successful Youth Committee  
Lucas County Family and Children First Council

11-17-09

Date



David Grossman, M.D., Health Commissioner  
Toledo-Lucas County Regional Health District

11/17/09

Date