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

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-Expsoure 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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Related Tools & Publications

Addressing Sexually Transmitted Infections in Pediatrics
Research at a Glance
Apr 2019

Ensuring Comprehensive Care and Support for Gender Non-Conforming Children and Adolescents
Evidence to Action Briefs
Dec 2015

IknowUshould2: Feasibility of a Youth-Driven Social Media Campaign to Promote STI and HIV Testing Among Adolescents in Philadelphia

Article
Jan 2015