

NEEDLE-MOVING COLLABORATIVES THREE-YEAR FOLLOW-UP

Milwaukee Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative

Focus: Teen pregnancy; metrics tracked include teen birth rate.

Founding date: 2006

Leadership (backbone): United Way of Greater Milwaukee

Results at time of 2012 study: The teen pregnancy rate in Milwaukee had dropped 31 percent between 2006 and 2011, from a high in 2006 of 52 births per 1,000 teenage girls.

Most recent results: By 2013, the rate had dropped much further—decreasing 56 percent since 2006, far exceeding the collaborative’s original goal of a 46 percent reduction in teen pregnancy.

Milwaukee’s experience over the last three years: Milwaukee’s teen pregnancy initiative is a story of focus and continuity in its partnerships and its methods. The same set of key players—United Way, the city’s health and schools department, and nonprofit organizations—have remained with the initiative from the beginning, though some new partners have also been added. The two cochairs of its oversight

“Make no mistake, this new goal will be even more difficult to meet.”

ELIZABETH BRENNER, PUBLISHER,
MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL AND
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INITIATIVE’S OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

committee, the head of the health department and the publisher of the city’s main daily newspaper, are the same ones the initiative started with. And its methods combining hard-hitting media and social marketing with group education in the schools and after-school programs have likewise remained essentially the same.

But unique among the collaboratives we studied, Milwaukee has achieved and exceeded by 10 percentage points its single, highly publicized goal of a 46 percent reduction in teen pregnancy. It then faced the question of whether to continue working solely on teen pregnancy, or whether to expand its work to include other issues that affect the same target population, like infant mortality or sexually transmitted diseases. In the end, Milwaukee decided to keep its focus

on teen pregnancy. In October 2014, Milwaukee's mayor and the collaborative's other leaders announced a new goal: an additional 50 percent drop in the teen pregnancy rate over the next decade, and an effort to reduce large racial and ethnic disparities in teen pregnancy among the city's Black and Hispanic youth.

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