

# **TEEN PREGNANCY TASK FORCE**

## ***Meeting Minutes***

January 27, 2010

### **I. Call to order**

Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, 5<sup>th</sup> District called to order the first meeting of the Teen Pregnancy Task Force at 10:05 AM on January 27, 2010 in the Suffolk County Legislative Building, North County Complex, Hauppauge, NY 11788.

### **II. Roll call**

The following persons were present and officially appointed as Teen Pregnancy Task Force members:

Janet P. Cassidy, SC One-Stop Employment Center, Jennifer Freeman, Suffolk County Executive Office, Nancy Hemendinger, Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Penny Ilberg, Department of Social Services, Molly Licalzi, Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Ann Maurren, Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Christina Noonan, Planned Parenthood, Judith Specht, RN., Stony Brook Hospital, Marcia K. Spector, SNAP, Lorraine Squires, Mastics Moriches Shirley Community Library, Virginia R. Suhr, Legislative Aide, Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Legislator, 5<sup>th</sup> District

### **III. Open issues**

- a) Marcia Spector reported since the 1985 Task Force was created there was a 50% drop in teen pregnancies. However, there has been an increase in the last few years in younger teens, ages 12-14. This newly created task force will be responsible for identifying new trends in teenage pregnancy and recommending intervention and prevention strategies.
- b) Virginia Suhr read the official Resolution.
- c) All members introduced themselves. It was reported that there will be at least 3 public hearings and a report is due to the Legislature in 180 days.
- d) Group discussed locations for public hearings. Sites were identified where there is a high incidence of teen pregnancies. Marcia Spector suggested not scheduling hearings at schools.
- e) Janet Cassidy asked if we were trying to reach parents or students. Marcia Spector responded that we must cover a broad cross section of society and there must be communication between parents and students.
- f) The group identified target populations and organizations to attend public hearings. Nancy Hemendinger suggested we reach out to religious affiliations. Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher reported that the task force was contacted by a religious group. She was not aware if the group would be participating. Lorraine Squires commented that the Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Library has an active teen parent group. Colonial Youth also has an active teen parenting group. Marcia Spector also suggested TASA

- (Teenage Services Act) which are housed in DSS. PTAs, Guidance Offices, Eastern and Western Suffolk BOCES' network of social workers, pediatricians and Stony Brook Hospital's new adolescent medical group were suggested. Judith Specht commented that in her experience, pediatricians are not comfortable discussing sexual assault or pregnancy issues. Women's Health Nurse Practitioners and LI Doulas were recommended.
- g) Nancy Hemendinger reported that the Office of Health Education offers *HealthSmart*, a K-12 comprehensive health education curriculum to all public and private Suffolk County schools. K-6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom teachers are trained and are sometimes responsible for teaching the puberty lessons. The Health Department provides educators to assist those teachers not comfortable with the puberty lessons. When requested, Nancy speaks with parents of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students about the puberty lessons. Secondary school health educators are also trained and are comfortable teaching personal health units. Penny Ilberg commented that with new technology, including cell phones, teens are much more educated than parents in obtaining information from the internet. She believes that sexual behavior has become normalized. Christina Noonan stated that these details are far more exaggerated than what actually happens. She blamed the media for much of the over-reporting. Marcia Spector commented on children being victimized by sexual assault or abuse, that some are pressured into relationships because of the family's socio-economic status or racial background.
  - h) Handouts were distributed from Guttmacher Institute's Media Center, which stated that, for more than a decade, the nation's teen pregnancy rate rose, reflecting increases in teen births and abortion rates. Marcia Spector commented on the increase of teen pregnancy especially in the Latino community. Several factors that have increased this population's risk are: economic, cultural, religious and education levels. For some families, they are proud when their teen daughters are pregnant. Christina Noonan reported that some girls get their birth control from bodegas. These pills are imported, not regulated, and are dangerous. Teens want to use contraception, but since the parents are undocumented, they are afraid to go to Planned Parenthood.
  - i) Christina Noonan also commented that schools are not willing to promote contraception. Each school district and administration has their own policies about the material that is allowed to be presented. Legislator Vilorio-Fisher asked Nancy Hemendinger the process for training teachers. Nancy explained that before teachers attend a *HealthSmart* training, she meets with administrators, principals and faculty. Teachers attend a full day of training. To track curriculum implementation, year-end surveys are administered to teachers and health educators visit the classroom. Health Educators also provide supplementary presentations on STIs, HIV and tobacco prevention. Nancy was asked to bring the curriculum to the next meeting.
  - j) Discussion regarding Brentwood school district and how we are "not in there" just by speaking Spanish, but must also become bicultural to remove barriers. Students are afraid to go to Family Planning and sometimes it's too far away. Central Islip and Brentwood have a high number of teen pregnancies. A suggestion was made to outreach to Latino churches and LILTA (Long Island Latino Teachers Association).
  - k) Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher discussed the recommendation for public hearings and it was decided to identify with Latino populations and high risk areas. It was

- suggested that the public hearings be held at Touro Law School in Central Islip, Riverhead County Center in Riverhead, Mastic Moriches Shirley Library in Shirley and possibly a 4<sup>th</sup> meeting in Babylon Town Hall. Everyone present should bring a list of names and emails for people to contact who might want to attend. We can also send personal invitations to certain people and groups for the Task Force meetings.
- l) Marcia Spector distributed folders from SNAP including their organizational profile and statistics related to adolescent pregnancy and sexuality. Christina Noonan reported that May is Teen Pregnancy Awareness Month.
  - m) Public hearings will tentatively be held in March, April, May and June depending on availability. Attendees were requested to bring their school calendars to the next meeting.
  - n) Sandra Gil was a person of interest to be invited to future meetings.
  - o) Discussion regarding statistics: in 1960, ½ of white brides were pregnant and premarital sex has not increased in the past 40 years.

**IV. New business**

- a) Next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM.

**V. Adjournment**

Legislator Vivian Vilorio-Fisher adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.

Minutes submitted by: Ann Maurren