The Health Disparity of Teen Pregnancy

Jailene Matias
DOHERTY HIGH SCHOOL

Peter Nguyen
SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

Kavin Udayaprakash
SHREWSBURY HIGH SCHOOL
Health disparities
Preventable differences in terms of disease and injury that keep socially disadvantaged populations from achieving optimal health.

Ageism
Prejudice or discrimination on the grounds of a person's age.

Inequity
Differences that are unfair, avoidable, and unjust.

Obstetrics
The field of study concentrated on pregnancy, childbirth and the postpartum period.
Why is Teen Pregnancy a Disparity?
Teenage mothers face discrimination and mistreatment because of their age and struggle through:

- Access
- Poverty
- Stigma
Video

Physical and Emotional Risks of Teen Pregnancy: What Every Teen Needs to Know

(Health Care Lover, 2023)
Thoughts on video?
Why is Access to Healthcare Difficult for Teens?

- Insufficient amount of sex education
- Difference in treatment
Sex Education In Mass.

Lack of Sex Education

State
Massachusetts doesn’t require sex education

School
Schools choose to not teach sex education

Parent
Parents don’t want their kid to learn sex education

Should Massachusetts require all public school districts to offer sex education classes?

- Yes: 97% (14 responses)
- No: 25%
- Don’t know: 1%

When does your school require Sex Education/Health?

- 3.5-6 years: 28.6%
- 6-11 years: 14.5%
- 11-17 years: 21.4%
- 18 years and older: 38.7%

The Healthy Youth Act would require sex ed programs to be based on "medically accurate and age-appropriate information." Would you let your child participate?

- Yes, I’m a high school student or younger: 14%
- No, I’m not a high school student or older: 86%

Zipporah Osei, 2023

(SIECUS, 2020)
(Osei, 2023)
(Collaborative, 2023)
Lack of Sex Education State

Massachusetts doesn’t require high school or middle schools to teach sex education

---

**Should Massachusetts require all public school districts to offer sex education classes?**

- Yes: 957 (74%)
- No: 200 (25%)
- Other: 1 (1%)

---

**State Sex Education Policies and Requirements at a Glance**

- Massachusetts schools are not required to teach sex education.
- Curriculum must explain the benefits of abstinence.
- If sex education is offered, curriculum is not required to include instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity.

---

(Zipporah Osei, 2022)
Lack of Sex Education

Schools choose to not teach sex education
Lack of Sex Education

Parent

Parents don’t want their kid to learn sex education

The Healthy Youth Act would require sex ed programs to be based on "medically accurate and age-appropriate information." Would you let your child participate?

- No: 22%
- Yes, in high school but not younger: 8%
- Yes, in middle school or older: 8%
- No, in elementary school or older: 64%
- I’ll have to review the curriculum in detail before deciding: 8%

Zipporah Osei, 2023
The Effects of Lack of Sex Ed

1. Increased Rates of STI
2. Higher Rates of Teen Pregnancy
3. Misconceptions of Sex and Pregnancy

(The Lancet, 2022)
The Effects of Lack of Sex Ed

1. Increased Rates of STI
2. Higher Rates of Teen Pregnancy
3. Misconceptions of Sex and Pregnancy

(The Lancet, 2022)
Difference in Care Between Pregnant Teenagers and Adults

Teenagers
- Ageism
- Inadequate care
- Funding cut for 81 programs

Adults
- More Resources for mental and physical health
- Better health insurance
- Welcomed in hospital and community

(Belluck, 2017)
Poverty and Economic Inequity

Teen Pregnancy in Poverty

Cost of Care
Teen Pregnancy in Poverty

Poverty in MA 2021

(Goldstein, 2023)
Cost for Care

Costs $11,000 for a vaginal birth and $20,000 for a cesarean section, not including prenatal or postnatal care.

Teenagers can only work 40 hours a week with a minimum wage of $15 per hour.

How are teen parents expected to pay these expenses?
"They are a shame to the community"

Many people assume teen mothers are

Troubled
Exploitive
Poor parents
Dependent
Promiscuous
Emotional
Personal Story of Overcoming Teen Pregnancy Stigmas

Natasha Vianna

Her high school promptly told her “It’s unlikely you’ll even graduate, so let’s just focus on finishing high school.”

At age 33 she is giving Ted Talks about her experience working with Boston politicians.

(Ney, 2024)
Personal Story of Overcoming Teen Pregnancy Stigmas

Natasha Vianna
Solutions

Supporting Government and State Legislatures

Informing Teens of Effective Contraceptives

Using mass media to encourage safe sex

S.2459
AN ACT RELATIVE TO HEALTHY YOUTH

Ensures school districts offering sex education provide their students with age-appropriate, medically-accurate information.

Requires the teaching of healthy relationships, the benefits of abstinence, as well as information on contraception.

Ensures materials be inclusive of all gender identities and sexual orientations and address the health needs of all youth.
Thank You!

Contact us for more information

Kavin Udayaprakash
Shrewsbury High School
kavin.udayaprakash@gmail.com

Jailene Matias
Doherty Memorial High School
matiasjailene@gmail.com

Peter Nguyen
South High School
pete627@yahoo.com
Citations


