



For immediate release

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Community Colleges Take On Unplanned Pregnancy at Capitol Hill Event

(Washington, DC) — Fully 7 in 10 pregnancies among single women in their 20s are unplanned. Many of these women attend community colleges and are at risk for dropping out or failing to earn a degree. At an event on November 17 on Capitol Hill, representatives from several community colleges highlighted the steps they are taking to improve student retention and success by addressing pregnancy planning, prevention, and healthy relationships.

The event was hosted by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and Child Trends, along with honorary co-hosts Representatives Michael Castle (R-DE), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), and Tim Ryan (D-OH). David Baime, Vice President for Government Affairs at the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), and Andrea Kane, Senior Director of Policy and Partnerships at The National Campaign, moderated the event.

There are 11.5 million students in community colleges, representing nearly half (46%) of all undergraduate students in the United States. For many, an unplanned pregnancy means the difference between a student dropping out of school or receiving a degree. Nearly half (48%) of community college students have ever been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant. At present, 61% of women who have children after enrolling in community college don't finish their education—a rate 65% higher than the rate for those who don't have children.

Lina Guzman, Ph.D., Senior Researcher at Child Trends, shared preliminary findings from qualitative research about what community college students say about unplanned pregnancy. Many of the students interviewed for the study believe that an unplanned pregnancy while in school will derail their goals, but there is a significant lack of knowledge about birth control among students.

Also participating in the event:

- Hon. Margaret Rose Henry, Delaware State Senator and Assistant Dean of Student Services at Delaware Technical and Community College-Wilmington/Stanton campus,

- Linda J. Roberts, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and
- Jim Walters, Director of Student Life at Montgomery College-Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

At the event Rep. DeLauro noted, “We have come together from two very diverse fields—one focused on educational attainment, student retention and completion and one focused on preventing unplanned pregnancy including teen pregnancy. We have done so because the data make the compelling case that these two areas are uniquely intertwined.” She also described grants to help community colleges address unplanned pregnancy included in the Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion, and Support Parents Act (HR 3312) that she co-authored with Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH).

Jim Walters discussed Montgomery College’s effort to work with students and help them think about how their decisions and choices can affect their educational success, through student forums and integrating discussions of unplanned pregnancy into various classes.

Linda Roberts described the importance of addressing unplanned pregnancy by providing sex and contraception information together with education on healthy relationships and responsible drinking. She and her collaborators are developing a website that uses this approach to reach students on the University of Wisconsin Colleges’ 13 primarily rural campuses.

Margaret Rose Henry highlighted Delaware Tech’s initiative to raise awareness among faculty, staff and students about unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and to provide convenient services to students in a campus clinic.

Rep. Castle, who serves both as co-chair of the Community College Caucus and of the House Advisory Panel for The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, indicated that decreasing high rates of unplanned pregnancy can ultimately have the positive effect of increasing student retention and helping students achieve their educational objectives.

A new publication—*Getting Started At Community Colleges: Reducing Unplanned Pregnancy and Strengthening Academic Achievement*—was released at the Capitol Hill event. The publication offers ideas on how community colleges can address unplanned pregnancy prevention and other related issues.

Please visit www.TheNationalCampaign.org/resources/cc.aspx for more information about community colleges and unplanned pregnancy. For more information about other participating organizations visit:

- Child Trends: www.ChildTrends.org
- American Association of Community Colleges: www.aacc.nche.edu
- Delaware Technical and Community College: www.dtcc.edu
- Montgomery College: www.montgomerycollege.edu/edu/
- University of Wisconsin Colleges: www.uwc.edu/

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