



The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

To: Obama-Biden Transition Team

From: Sarah S. Brown, CEO

Date: December 18, 2008

Re: Administrative Actions to Reduce Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

The new Administration will have a powerful platform from which to make progress on reducing both teen pregnancy as well as unplanned pregnancy more generally. Doing so will help reduce poverty, improve educational outcomes, strengthen the workforce, enhance health, promote personal responsibility, and reduce costs.

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy recommends a number of short term steps the new Administration could take to make significant progress on these issues, either through executive action or in the President's FY10 budget request. We are available to provide more information about any of these ideas, as well as about the issue of teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy more generally. In addition, we will provide a separate document in the coming weeks describing a longer-term agenda, including measures that require working with Congress. For more information, please contact Andrea Kane, Senior Director of Policy and Partnerships, at (202) 478-8554 or akane@thenc.org or Jessica Swafford, Senior Manager of Public Policy, at (202) 478-8529 or jswafford@thenc.org. For more information about The National Campaign, please visit: www.thenationalcampaign.org.

OUR SHARED GOALS

As the Obama-Biden Administration seeks to make progress on a number of pressing challenges—poverty and limited opportunity in America, a spiraling economy, a broken health care system, two wars, finding common ground on difficult social issues such as abortion and others—The National Campaign offers the following recommendations that we believe support your agenda.

Strengthen Fatherhood and Families: More must be done to involve men in a meaningful way to prevent unplanned pregnancy—both *primary* prevention and prevention of subsequent pregnancies. Helping men who are not ready to be a father avoid unplanned pregnancy and helping men who are already fathers delay having additional children until they are emotionally, financially, and otherwise ready (such as being in a stable healthy relationship, including marriage) will promote personal responsibility and strengthen families.

Tackle Concentrated Poverty: One strategic and powerful way to help ensure that fewer children are born into poverty is to help teens and young adults wait to have children until they are prepared for the lifelong responsibilities of raising a child. For those young people who are already parents, we should do all we can to help them plan for their family's future and to think about how additional children might affect their relationship, their goals, and their ability to be the best parents they can be for the child or children they have. Including pregnancy planning and prevention among a wide range of other education, health, and social services will help reduce poverty.

Find Common Ground on Abortion by Helping Women and Men Avoid Unplanned Pregnancy: Unplanned pregnancies are closely linked to a number of negative health, social and economic consequences for women, children, families and communities; and unplanned pregnancy also lies behind the vast majority of the nation's abortions. Helping women and men avoid unplanned pregnancy in the first place means fewer abortions—a fact that should help those on both sides of the abortion debate find common ground.

Promote Public Health and Reduce Health Disparities: Pregnancy prevention and planning is a critical element of basic health care that saves taxpayer dollars and improves public health. For example, CBO has scored a

provision allowing more states to expand eligibility for Medicaid family planning as saving at least \$400 million over 10 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Department of Education- Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education

FY10 Budget Recommendation: Include at least \$100 million for a competitive grant program for community colleges and similar post-secondary institutions to implement a wide range of activities designed to help students avoid unplanned pregnancy. Ten percent of this funding should be dedicated to high-quality evaluations of the success of these programs.

Department of Health and Human Services

No-Cost Recommended Executive Actions:

1. Direct the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, the National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other key parts of HHS to work together to analyze the recent increase in the teen birth rate, consult with outside experts, and report to the President on possible explanations behind these trends and what actions might help reverse them.
2. Challenge the nation to redouble its efforts to reduce teen pregnancy by highlighting this issue in the State of the Union and by setting a new national goal to reduce teen pregnancy.
3. Establish a high-level, interagency council, led by the Assistant Secretary for Health, to provide national leadership on pregnancy prevention and planning and to highlight the benefits of varying sectors addressing this issue, including maternal and child health, workforce development, businesses, and more.

Health and Human Services - Administration for Children and Families (ACF)

No-Cost Recommended Executive Actions:

1. Clarify that education about pregnancy planning and prevention is an important and allowable activity within Healthy Marriage grants by issuing guidance clarifying that prevention of unplanned pregnancy is an important component of healthy marriage and relationship programs that will strengthen families, and by supporting additional resources, training, and technical assistance as needed.
2. Pending a legislative improvement, increase the role and responsibilities of men in preventing unplanned pregnancy through Responsible Fatherhood grants by issuing guidance clarifying that prevention of subsequent pregnancies is an important component of responsible fatherhood activities that will strengthen families and by supporting additional resources, training, and technical assistance as needed.
3. Provide states and communities with more flexibility in how they use existing abstinence funding by re-instating guidance similar to that instituted by the Clinton Administration and in effect through 2002, which indicated programs did not have to give equal emphasis to all eight points in the “A-H” definition of abstinence education;
4. Explore giving states who have opted out of the existing abstinence funds flexibility to use these resources for other effective teen pregnancy prevention programs; and
5. Ensure that *all* federally-funded teen pregnancy prevention programs include medically accurate information.
6. Provide technical assistance to state independent living programs and caseworkers in agencies that are charged with developing transition plans on how they can incorporate pregnancy prevention messages and strategies into the transitional service plans for youth aging out of foster care required by the Fostering Connections to Success Act.

7. Emphasize through administrative guidance and technical assistance the new data reporting requirement under the Chaffee Act to track births to foster care youth. This could be used as a way to encourage states to implement innovative strategies, in partnership with other public and private organizations, to address pregnancy prevention for these youth.

FY10 Budget Recommendation: Refocus the existing abstinence funding on teen pregnancy prevention programs that have stronger evidence of effectiveness, and provide states more flexibility to put in place strategies that meet the needs of their teens. Ten percent of this funding should be dedicated to research to continue developing and testing strategies, including programs with a strong abstinence message and programs for underserved populations, to provide communities with a range of high-quality, evidence-based approaches to reduce teen pregnancy. Funding should also be provided for a national resource center to provide information and technical assistance to a variety of sectors on effective strategies to reduce teen pregnancy.

Health and Human Services - Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

No-Cost Recommended Executive Action: Direct the Division of Reproductive Health to coordinate an interagency action plan to reduce unintended pregnancy in conjunction with state, local and tribal health agencies, advocacy organizations, and researchers.

FY10 Budget Recommendations:

1. Include an additional \$30 million for the CDC and its partners to undertake this work including demonstration grants to test digital outreach and messages to the target population.
2. Include an additional \$15 million for NCHS to help reach the goal of funding NCHS at \$175 million by FY13.

Health and Human Services - Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

No-Cost Recommended Executive Actions:

1. The HHS Secretary should issue a new regulation defining a fourth category of safety-net providers to include college clinics and clinics that serve low-income populations.
2. Direct CMS to issue a “Dear State Medicaid Director” letter that creates a “good cause” exemption allowing Medicaid coverage during the citizenship verification period, and giving states flexibility to determine what documentation is sufficient for establishing eligibility for family planning and other health services.
3. Streamline the waiver process for pending or new Medicaid family planning waivers.
4. Take immediate action to reverse the new HHS conscience clause regulation.

FY10 Budget Recommendation: Submit a FY10 budget to Congress that assumes the alignment of states’ Medicaid eligibility requirements for pregnancy-related care and family planning services. (*saves \$200 million over 5 years/\$400 million over 10 years*)

Health and Human Services – Office of Population Affairs (OPA)

No-Cost Recommended Executive Action: Review the Title X family planning program guidance to ensure it is consistent with the current evidence-based best practices and standards of care for clinical, education, and counseling services and to allow the flexibility to deliver client-centered care.

FY10 Budget Recommendation: Include \$700 million for Title X.

Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration

In any initiative to serve youth and young adults, pregnancy prevention and planning should be a key strategy to ensure that young people are adequately prepared for the 21st Century workforce. For example, the Department of Labor should explore opportunities similar to the Youth Opportunity Grant program to align community efforts to address not only education and training but also pregnancy prevention, which would affect participants’ success.