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# Community Youth Focus

FMCH Community Coalition – Building a network of services for youth

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## Youth participate in Community Health Assessment through photovoice project

Every five years, Contra Costa Health Services' Family, Maternal and Child Health (FMCH) Programs conducts an assessment of the needs of the community. As part of this Community Health Assessment, we are utilizing the photovoice technique to involve youth in the assessment process.

The goals of this project, called [Picture This!](#), are 1) to encourage and enable youth in Contra Costa County to record and share their community's strengths and concerns through photographs, 2) to provide a venue, through group discussion of photographs, for promoting awareness and dialogue about important community issues, 3) to reach the general public and policy makers through a photography exhibition.

Youth from the [TeenAge Program's Empowerment Through Action and Bridge to Power](#) groups at Pittsburg High School will participate in six weekly [Picture This!](#) sessions. The project will commence in early February. During the first sessions, staff will guide youth on photography methods and ethics of documentary photography and will provide youth with cameras and film to take pictures of what they consider to be important health issues in their community. The following sessions will focus on reviewing and prioritizing pictures, writing stories to accompany the pictures, and discussing the themes that arise from this process.

On June 17, 2004, FMCH Programs will host an exhibition of participating youth's photographs as part of a celebration of the completion of the Community Health Assessment. Policymakers, providers, and community members from across Contra Costa County will be invited to view these important photographs and learn about the health topics and community issues that are important to East County youth.

For more information about [Picture This!](#), contact Ericka Leer at (925) 313-6254 or [eleer@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us](mailto:eleer@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us).

For more information about the Community Health Assessment, contact Padmini Parthasarathy at (925) 313-6178 or [pparthas@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us](mailto:pparthas@hsd.co.contra-costa.ca.us). ✉

## Confidentiality and minor consent issues in California

The laws regarding confidentiality and minor consent are often complicated and confusing for adolescent health care providers. To address this concern, the [California Adolescent Health Collaborative](#) in partnership with the [San Francisco Adolescent Health Working Group](#) and the [California Family Health Council](#) recently sponsored a training entitled, "Confidentiality, Minor Consent Laws, and Practice Concerns When Treating Teen Patients." The training covered practice standards and guidelines, policy issues, and other relevant information for providers.

Youth have special rights to confidentiality and consent when seeking and receiving reproductive health services. For example, in California, minors age 12 and over may consent to receiving birth control, medical care related to the prevention and treatment of pregnancy (except sterilization), medical care related to the diagnosis or treatment of the disease, and the diagnosis and treatment of HIV/AIDS (including written consent for an HIV test) without parental consent. Minors in California may also consent to an abortion without parental consent and without court permission. In addition, for all of these services, the health care provider is not permitted to inform a parent or legal guardian without the minor's consent.

However, the laws around consent and confidentiality for general medical care are quite different. Minors who are age 15 and older, live apart from their parents or guardians, and manage their own financial affairs can consent to medical or dental care. Also, in this case, the

See Confidentiality, page 2

### Did You Know?

- ❖ In 2001, 23% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 30% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders in California reported having ever driven a car when drinking alcohol, OR been in a car driven by a friend who had been drinking.
- ❖ Also, 13% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 26% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders reported having consumed five drinks in a row at least once in the past 30 days.

(Source: 2001 California Student Survey)

## Confidentiality from page 1

physician or dentist can release information about treatment to the parent or guardian.

These distinct variations in the law, based on medical situation, illustrate the vital need for providers to clearly understand confidentiality and consent issues for minors.

For more information, contact the Adolescent Health Working Group at [info@ahwg.net](mailto:info@ahwg.net) or (415) 576-1170 x301.

Source: M. Simmons, J. Shalwitz, S. Pollock, A. Young (2003). *Understanding Confidentiality and Minor Consent in California: An Adolescent Provider Toolkit*. First Revised Edition. San Francisco, CA: Adolescent Health Working Group, San Francisco Health Plan. [Download this handbook at http://www.ahwg.net/resources/toolkit.htm](http://www.ahwg.net/resources/toolkit.htm). ☞

## Tips For Protecting Youth Confidentiality

(From *Understanding Confidentiality and Minor Consent in California: An Adolescent Provider Toolkit*)

- ▶ Do not discuss patient information in elevators, hallways, or waiting rooms.
- ▶ Do not collect an adolescent patient's medical history or reason for visit in an open area.
- ▶ When an adolescent patient gives you a contact phone number, make sure that you can leave messages.
- ▶ Likewise, do not send mail (such as appointment reminders and bills) home unless you have discussed whether or not the patient feels comfortable receiving mail from you at his or her home.
- ▶ When discussing anything sensitive, such as sexual history, weight, or substance use, make sure all doors are closed.
- ▶ Think about how your clinic administers paperwork to patients.
- ▶ Make sure that any clinic literature your clinic or practice distributes is small enough to fit into a purse or wallet.
- ▶ At the beginning of the appointment, make it clear that a provider is required to maintain patient confidentiality, except under very specific circumstances.

## TEEN CORNER:

From youth in Empowerment Through Action (ETA), a youth development group at Pittsburg High School:

"I like working with a group like ETA to help out my school and the community to bring better events and activities to everyone." - Justin

"I joined ETA because I wanted to be able to contribute to the community, and to make a difference for the benefit of others." - Jane

"I joined a group like ETA because I wanted to be part of a group that has a cause and that wants to change the community for the better." - Nikko

## RESOURCES

- [Guide to Local Adolescent Health Data Sources in California](http://youth.ucsf.edu/nahic/img/CAGuide1203.doc)  
<http://youth.ucsf.edu/nahic/img/CAGuide1203.doc> (click OK or Cancel when asked for username and password)
- [Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies: Reproductive Health of African American Adolescents](http://www.jointcenter.org/whatsnew/a_report/a-report.htm)  
[http://www.jointcenter.org/whatsnew/a\\_report/a-report.htm](http://www.jointcenter.org/whatsnew/a_report/a-report.htm)
- [MCH Library—Knowledge Path: Physical Activity and Children and Adolescents](http://www.mchlibrary.org/KnowledgePaths/kp_p_hys_activity.html)  
[http://www.mchlibrary.org/KnowledgePaths/kp\\_p\\_hys\\_activity.html](http://www.mchlibrary.org/KnowledgePaths/kp_p_hys_activity.html)
- [Teens and TANF: How Adolescents Fare Under the Nation's Welfare Program](http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/3390-index.cfm)  
<http://www.kff.org/womenshealth/3390-index.cfm>

If you would like to be added to the mailing list of Community Youth Focus or the Family, Maternal & Child Health Community Coalition, please e-mail [pparthas@hds.co.contra-costa.ca.us](mailto:pparthas@hds.co.contra-costa.ca.us).



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