



Karina Vattana MD

Andrew Aligne MD, MPH, Abigail Kroening MD, Lekeyah Wilson MD

URMC Pediatrics, Hoekelman Center for Health Beyond Medicine, Rochester General Pediatrics Associates

## PROJECT SUMMARY:

**My project is intended to increase adolescent access to age appropriate, medically accurate puberty and health education.**

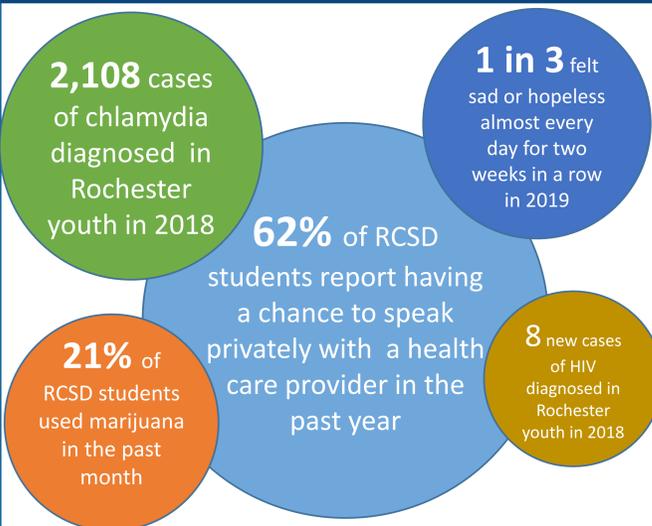
## INTRODUCTION:

Access to education strongly influences adolescent health. Providing adolescents with the knowledge that they need to understand pubertal changes leads to positive body attitudes, decreased stress about body changes, and improved mental and physical health outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

Less than half of U.S. primary and secondary schools require puberty education in any given year.<sup>2</sup> In addition, systematic reviews have shown that low-income girls in the United States are particularly unprepared for puberty. This is thought to be due to a lack of information or "information that [is] inaccurate, insufficient or provided too late."<sup>3</sup>

Lack of knowledge about body changes during puberty can contribute to low self-esteem and poorer perceived self-image.<sup>3</sup> Low self-esteem has been shown to contribute to poor coping strategies, increased risk-taking behaviors (drug and alcohol use, decreased condom use) and increased depression and anxiety rates in adolescents.<sup>4</sup>

## Youth Profile in Rochester City School District:



## Puberty/Health Education in Rochester:

- 39% of schools surveyed nationally in the School Health Policies and Practices Study (SHPPS) 2014 reported formalized puberty education.
- Puberty education is not a health education standard in New York State education.
- Current implementation of puberty education within the Rochester City School District is inconsistent.

## RELEVANCE:

As fewer than 40% of schools surveyed nationally report formalized puberty education, and most RSCD students see a health care provider annually, **routine health maintenance visits remain the best way to ensure adolescents in Rochester receive puberty education.**

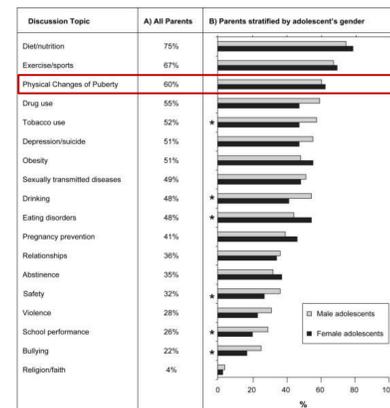


Figure 1: Puberty remains at the top of the list (3rd) for parental preference of discussed topics on well child visits.

- Current pediatric guidelines recommend covering puberty at the annual well-child visit beginning at 7 to 8 years of age, with genital exams recommended during adolescence.<sup>5</sup>
- In a survey of 2050 parents of 9-17 year olds, 60% of parents named puberty as a "very important topic for the doctor to address during routine check ups for adolescents."<sup>6</sup> (Figure 1)
- Studies show that when sensitive topics are discussed privately with adolescents in primary care settings, youth are more likely to take an active role in decision-making and treatment which can lead to improved outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

## DESIRED OUTCOMES:

1. Improve Puberty Education in Clinic
2. Improve and encourage family discussions regarding puberty
3. Improved Teen Outreach Program Scores
4. Improved PHQ-2 scores pre/post intervention
5. Improved Self Esteem scores



The Care and Keeping of You: The Body Book for Younger Girls, American Girl Library

## REFERENCES:

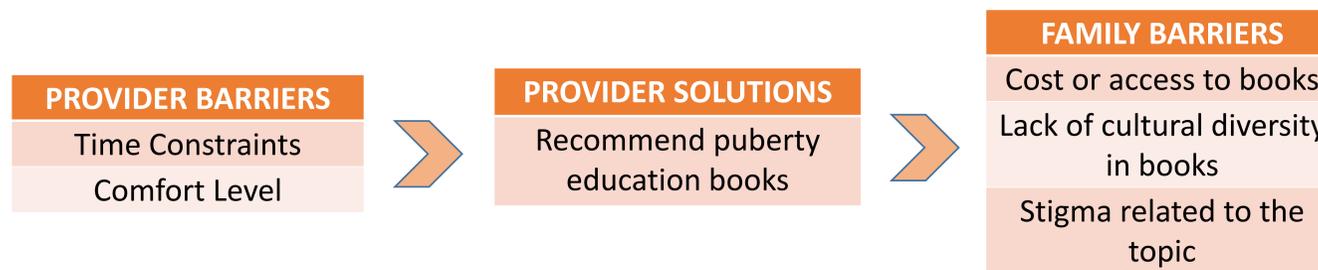
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## CURRENT BARRIERS AND SOLUTIONS:



## METHODS:

