EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SEXUAL HEALTH CARE AND SEX EDUCATION IN WORCESTER

Our goal: Decrease stigma and improve access to sexual and reproductive health care and education for Latino/a/x and/or Hispanic teens and teen parents in Worcester.

- Teens and teen parents of Latino/a/x and/or Hispanic heritage in Worcester don’t have the same access to sexual and reproductive health care and education as their peers.
- Why? Stigma surrounding sexual health and contraception use, lack of school-based sex education, and lack of access to sexual and reproductive health care.
  - In Worcester, the infant mortality rate for Latina and Black women are 3x and 2x greater than their white counterparts, respectively.
  - In Worcester, communities of color face disparities in STI rates as well as access to sexual and reproductive healthcare.
- Addressing this health injustice is part of our mission. In collaboration with and following the lead of our community partners, PPLM’s goals in Worcester are to:

  - **Decrease stigma around sexual health care and education.**
  - **Improve access to culturally appropriate, high-quality sexual and reproductive health care and evidence-based, comprehensive sex education for the Latino/a/x and/or Hispanic communities, teens, and teen parents.**
  - **Improve city-level sexual health outcomes.**
PPLM has been caring for and educating the Worcester community for nearly 40 years and will continue to work with and in the Latino/a/x and/or Hispanic communities to empower young people with the care and information they need, helping them make health care decisions that are right for them and their futures.

In collaboration with community partners, PPLM is actively working to:

**BUILD POLITICAL POWER WITHIN THE LATINO/A/X AND/OR HISPANIC COMMUNITIES**

- Foster partnerships and support partners’ advocacy efforts.
- Through the Raíz program, break down barriers to health care access and build organizing power within the Latino/a/x and/or Hispanic communities.

**IMPROVE QUALITY OF AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION & INFORMATION**

- Build the Sexual Health Ambassador Program, a staff-supported collective of volunteer Latino/a/x and/or Hispanic leaders, caregivers, parents, and organizers who raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health issues and inform others on accessing care in a wide range of community settings.
- Conduct local sexual health awareness campaigns.
- Host parent and youth education programs that center and empower Latino/a/x and/or Hispanic communities in Worcester.
- Mobilize in support of LGBTQ-inclusive sex ed in the Worcester Public Schools to educate students on contraception, STI prevention, and consent.
- Teach the Get Real curriculum in schools, community settings, and in programs for pregnant and parenting youth.

**INCREASE ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE HEALTH CARE**

- Increase the number of places people can get free or low cost contraception.
- Strengthen ongoing relationships with patients by increasing connections to resources and implementing telehealth.
- Deliver culturally responsive training for providers.