



3434 Harbor-Petoskey Rd., Suite A • Harbor Springs, Michigan, 49740 • 231-347-5041

For Release
September 1, 2016

Contact:
Katie Jourdan, Project Coordinator
kjourdan@dhd10.org
231-902-8528

Northern Michigan Campaign to Improve Reproductive Health

A public health campaign aimed at improving reproductive health among young adults in Northern Michigan is being launched today. The campaign, Beforeplay.org, looks to start the conversation about sexual health and family planning through an interactive website, social media campaign, and community education. With Beforeplay.org, communities in Northern Michigan are looking to enhance maternal and infant health by improving preconception health and reducing unintended pregnancy among young adults. Beforeplay.org is funded in part by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services through a Title X Family Planning Community Outreach Grant awarded to and supported by the Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance; a partnership of the seven local public health departments across the region.

The campaign is anchored by the website Beforeplay.org, which uses a conversational, non-judgmental tone to encourage young adults to take control of their sexual health by having conversations with their partners, friends, family members, and medical providers. The campaign recommends risk-reduction strategies to help individuals lead happy, healthy lives and plan ahead for a time when they are ready and want to become parents.

“Approximately 54 percent of pregnancies in Michigan are unintended,” according to Linda Yaroch, MPH, RN, Northern Michigan Public Health Alliance Chair and Health Officer for the Health Department of Northwest Michigan. “We know that assuring healthy moms and babies requires effort long before the positive pregnancy test and before prenatal care starts. Assisting men and women of childbearing ages with access to quality health care and education prior to pregnancy is a crucial step in improving health outcomes across the region.”

Beforeplay.org was originally developed in Colorado and reached huge success in starting conversations about sexual health with 18-29 year olds in that state. After asking young adults in Northern Michigan about their attitudes toward family planning, birth control, and STDs/STIs, the campaign has now been tailored to meet Northern Michigan’s needs and has received positive feedback from this age group.



A partnership of six local health departments dedicated to increasing capacity, maximizing assets, and containing costs to improve public health

www.nmhealthalliance.org



3434 Harbor-Petoskey Rd., Suite A • Harbor Springs, Michigan, 49740 • 231-347-5041

Beforeplay.org offers users a variety of planning options and empowers young people to make the choice that best fits their individual situation.

According to Katie Jourdan, Project Coordinator, the website features a comprehensive Michigan health care center finder, which highlights Title X funded health centers. Title X clinics provide confidential, low or no cost contraception, preconception health screenings, and education regardless of financial circumstances. Beforeplay.org also features a method selector for birth control, videos of peers talking about how they make healthy choices, and a blog regularly updated with information on sexual health and wellbeing.

“National research shows that most unmarried young adults think planning for pregnancy is important, but they don’t always act to make that a reality. Many don’t know enough about contraception and they are misinformed about pregnancy and the link between their health prior to pregnancy and positive maternal-child health outcomes,” said Dr. Jennifer Morse, Medical Director, District Health Department #10. “We’re trying to change that by helping young adults understand more about sexual health, learn how to prepare for a healthy pregnancy, and take action to achieve their personal goals.”

This Northern Michigan Campaign to Improve Reproductive Health is launching in partnership with local public health departments, colleges/ universities, community coalitions, community organizations and the Northern Michigan Perinatal Integration Regional Workgroup. For more information on the campaign, contact Katie Jourdan at 231-902-8528 or kjourdan@dhd10.org. To learn more visit www.Beforeplay.org.



A partnership of six local health departments dedicated to increasing capacity, maximizing assets, and containing costs to improve public health

www.nmhealthalliance.org