



WELCOME TO OUR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Director's Corner

Welcome to the inaugural edition of our "Connect for Success" newsletter! We're thrilled that you are part of our learning community and intend to bring you the latest updates, insights, and opportunities from our dynamic initiative designed to foster collaboration, drive innovation, and achieve our shared goals. Quarterly, we'll spotlight our grantees and the work they do to meet student needs, share happenings from the Connect for Success initiative, and highlight key resources

to help you connect more effectively around the topic of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for students.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) and Connect for Success understand this year's election is crucial, as reproductive rights face significant challenges that threaten to undermine fundamental freedoms. It's essential that we advocate fiercely to protect these rights, which are pivotal for ensuring that all students have the autonomy to make decisions about their own bodies and futures. Access to SRH care is a **basic need** that directly impacts students' ability to pursue economic freedom and academic success. By leaning in and championing these rights, we can help secure a more equitable and supportive environment for the next generation.

Let's connect, elevate, and movement build together!

-Dr. Martinique Free

What's in This Issue?

- Connect for Success Grant Award Announcements
- Connect for Success Grantee Meeting Recap
- Conference Highlights and Upcoming Meetings
- Grantee Spotlights
- Pulse on Policy
- Resource Hub

[KEEP READING](#)

Congratulations!!!

Connect for Success Initiative Grantees:



- Yellowhammer Fund, AL
- Ohlone College, Fremont, CA
- Solano Community College, Solano, CA
- UCSF Bixby Beyond the Pill Program, San Francisco, CA
- Frederick Community College, Frederick, MD
- Howard County Health Department, Columbia, MD
- WeARE, Brainerd, MN
- American Society for Emergency Contraception, Lawrenceville, NJ
- Take Control Initiative, Tulsa, OK
- Healthy Futures of Texas, San Antonio, TX
- Bellevue College, Bellevue, WA

Connect for Success looks forward to collaborating with you over the next two years to learn about your partnerships and programming!

Connect for Success Kick-off Grantee Orientation Meeting

The Connect for Success Grantee Orientation Meeting convened July 23–24 at the Eaton Hotel in Washington, DC. Those invited were grantees of Connect for Success

Initiative and other stakeholders working in the reproductive justice and higher education fields that provide community college students access to SRH services and supports. This meeting highlighted the current state of reproductive rights and what community colleges, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders are doing to increase positive economic outcomes for these students by meeting their sexual and reproductive care needs. Grant mechanics were discussed, and there were many opportunities for networking among grantees. Over the next two years, grantees of Connect for Success will engage IWPR in how they forge partnerships to meet the needs of community college students. We look forward to insights about partnership building and how grantees intend to expand access to sexual and reproductive support for their students on community college campuses.



HIGHLIGHT: LTAS Conference



The **Let's Talk About Sex Conference**, hosted by SisterSong, is the nation's largest convening on reproductive justice. This year's event marked the 30th Anniversary of the Reproductive Justice Movement with the theme "A Movement United Will Never Be Defeated." This conference provided an opportunity to showcase groundbreaking strategies and featured actionable takeaways in the reproductive justice field. Connect for Success hosted a panel titled **"Are You the Plug? Connecting to Reproductive Justice Organizing on Your College Campus."** Thank you to our grantees, the **American Society for Emergency Contraception, Solano Community College Reproductive Health Club, and Yellowhammer Fund** for participating in the panel!

Are You the Plug? Presenters and Friends



Martinique Free, PhD, MPH
Institute for Women's Policy Research
Director, Connect for Success



Jenice Fountain
Yellowhammer Fund
Executive Director



Celeste Davis, JD, MPH
Director, Public Health Scholars
American University



Jynesis Lee
Founder, The Protection Project SC



Jokeya Johnson
Program Manager
American Society for Emergency Contraception



Sriya Srivivasan
Student President, Reproductive Health Club
Solano Community College

HIGHLIGHTS



Tamara Boynton Howard, Associate Professor and Program Chair, standing in front of the HPM Hub at Bellevue College. The Hub provides essential sexual health resources to students and the community, supporting a proactive and inclusive approach to health education.



BROOKINGS BLOG:

Women's sexual and reproductive health at community colleges

by Dr. Martinique Free

When community colleges provide access to alternative menstrual products that are safe and affordable, they are doing their part in minimizing period poverty and ensuring students' basic needs are met.

[CLICK TO READ MORE](#)



From Sriya Srinivasan:

It's official: AB 2229, the KNOW YOUR PERIOD bill, is now LAW!

Students will receive comprehensive menstrual education, and what began as an idea is now a reality.

Now, Californians will KNOW THEIR PERIOD!

Save the Date!

Upcoming Events/Conferences/Meetings

- American Association for Community Colleges (AACC)- April 12-16, 2025, Nashville, TN
- American College Health Association (ACHA)- May 27-31, 2025, New Orleans, LA
- Association for Community College Trustees (ACCT)-National Legislative Summit Feb. 9-12th, 2025 Washington, D.C.

Know of other happenings to highlight? Let Connect for Success know so that we can include it in the quarterly newsletter. Email Dr. Free at free@iwpr.org with events to be included.

Grantee Spotlight



Sriya Srinivasan, Founder & President of SCCRHC

SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CLUB

Solano Community College's Reproductive Health Club (RHC) was founded in August 2023 to expand sexual and reproductive health (SRH) resources on campus. The RHC opened a Repro Health Center on campus to provide services and resources at zero cost, such as emergency contraception (EC), condoms, lubricants, STI testing, menstrual products, and more. Additionally, RHC hosts SRH-themed events, including Cocoa and Contraceptives, Love Your Period, and Talk Your Period.

The WHY

Our county has the highest rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea, and our campus is predominantly comprised of Black and Latinx students. The nearest Planned Parenthood is at least 25 miles away, which is inaccessible for the average college student even if using public transit. Our district is also strict on our sex education curriculums, adding unnecessary restrictions to the content we can consume. Our program here at Solano Community College is a start to dismantle the stigma attached to SRH.

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING WITH INTENTION

Initially, we operated via donations and through collaborations with local groups to host events. Our first tabling event was made possible by Emergency Contraception 4 Every Campus (EC4EC), allowing us to distribute over 100 donated Plan Bs to our students. We extended our services by collaborating with Solano Public Health/UCSF to administer HIV testing and provide safe sex kits to students. Planned Parenthood provides resources, and recently, we partnered with Advocates for Youth to host an Abortion Week on campus and National AIDS/HIV Awareness Week. Our school was also crucial in providing us with space on campus to use for our center. Funds provided through student fees by the student government gave us \$5,000 to jumpstart our initiatives this year.

VISION FOR EXPANSION

The main goals for this year include finishing the renovation of our Repro Health Center with murals and other community collaborative art projects to add to the atmosphere of our center. We plan on continuing our legislative work as we did with the Know Your Period campaign (AB 2229) and proposing new state bills. We will also be conducting a pilot project on high school students' access to EC, as many of our Solano students are high school students who are dual-enrolled. Finally, we'll be working on sub-projects such as a theatre production and a podcast to make learning about sex ed more fun!

SUPPORT FROM CONNECT FOR SUCCESS

The Connect for Success initiative has already tremendously advanced the expansion of our program goals. By providing us with the resources and connections vital to make our work possible, we students are able to use them to the best of our capabilities. The funding will go directly to the projects, but the support system will be used to make our practices here at SCC sustainable for years to come. We are so grateful to be the first student-run club to receive this grant. We are ready to prove to others that young people, the most impacted, can make the biggest difference in their communities. We were given this grant after proving what was possible with limited resources—imagine what can be possible with this grant! If you're interested in collaborating with us, please reach out and follow us on Instagram. There are no limits to what is possible!

Grantee Spotlight

HEALTHY FUTURES OF TEXAS

Healthy Futures of Texas, in partnership with Talk About It Austin Community College (ACC), supports student success among older teens and young adults in higher education by providing medically accurate sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education, resources, and clinic referrals for low- or no-cost providers. As an embedded campus resource housed under the Student Advocacy Center, we aim to connect young people with various wraparound support services available on and off campus. The program also leads a cohort of peer ambassadors each year who represent the student body's voice in supporting SRH on campus through paid participation in planning meetings, events, and training.

THE WHY

The 2022 Travis County Adolescent Health Report indicates over 66% of teen births were from 18- and 19-year-old young adults. Like many community colleges, ACC does not have an on-campus student health center, which can make it challenging for students who are juggling the demands of work, families, and school to seek the health care they need. Talk About It ACC provides a warm and welcoming environment where students can engage in sexual health education programs and events to learn more about their reproductive health and how to access resources available on and off campus, regardless of their insurance status.

PARTNERSHIP BUILDING WITH INTENTION

To increase program visibility across multiple campuses, Talk About It ACC frequently partners with the ACC Student Life Department to maintain consistent engagement amongst the student population. In addition, the program partners with the People's Community Clinic's Center for Adolescent Health (PCC), an adolescent-friendly clinic, to ensure a robust clinical referral system to support ACC students in seeking preventive health care. Program staff provide referrals to PCC and assist students in scheduling appointments and identifying documents needed to enroll in insurance programs, and also cohost PCC's Adolescent Health Symposium each spring, which brings together providers, community members, students, and faculty for networking and professional development.

VISION FOR EXPANSION

One of the primary goals for expansion in the coming year is to strengthen the clinical linkages and resource partnerships between Talk About It ACC (TAI ACC) and area providers to be responsive to the wide geographical footprint of the ACC campuses. Many ACC students are being referred to our clinical partner; however, there are limitations for those outside the age eligibility of the Center for Adolescent Health department, and there is a gap in the ability to apply for and receive services. In addition, not all campuses served by the TAI ACC program are located near PCC, making it necessary to expand our clinical partners to meet our students' needs better.

APPROACHES TO INCORPORATING FACULTY

One innovative approach we use to support overall student success is to recruit a cohort of faculty each year to complete a four-part professional development training series, which will equip them to become "Campus Champions" who serve as additional resources for their students and can advocate for Talk About It programming and goals. These faculty champions are critical for increasing program visibility as they recognize the intersection between SRH and their students' success. Oftentimes, these faculty members work with program staff to integrate sexual health programs into their coursework and syllabi and feel better able to navigate sensitive conversations with their students as a result of the workshops.

SUPPORT FROM CONNECT FOR SUCCESS

Support from Connect for Success allows additional resources to increase the clinical partners' budget for the remainder of the project, which will allow for the hiring of a dedicated PCC point of contact (POC). This POC will help with referrals from the campus to the clinic and support reverse referrals (reconnecting existing ACC student patients back to their campus).



(from left to right) Kelly Shoenfelt, Kelsey Olson Atkins, Sarah McQueen, and Ginger Mullaney

PULSE ON POLICY

This section focuses on updates to the current state of policies involving SRH care that may impact community college students.

- Interactive Map: US Abortion Policies and Access After Roe
- Abortion Referendums in 2024
 - States with Amendments on the ballot include Arizona, Colorado, Florida, **Maryland**, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, and New York.

Current Bills/Acts

- The Women's Health Protection Act (S.701): PASSED
 - Sets to codify abortion rights nationwide
- Reproductive Freedom for Women Act (S.4554): Introduced
 - Protecting access to reproductive health care after *Dobbs v. Jackson*. This bill was introduced but hasn't had much movement.
- Right to Contraception Act (S.4381): Introduced
 - A bill to protect an individual's ability to access contraceptives and to engage in contraception and to protect a health care provider's ability to provide contraceptives, contraception, and information related to contraception
- Trans Bill of Rights (H.R.269): Introduced
 - A bill to codify the rights of trans and nonbinary people under the law and ensure access to medical care, shelter, safety, and economic security
- Menstrual Equity for All Act (H.R.3646): Introduced
 - A bill to increase the availability and affordability of menstrual products for individuals with limited access. This bill would establish a grant program to support the provision of free sanitary napkins and tampons on campuses of institutions of higher education.



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**A JUST
FUTURE
begins
with BOLD
IDEAS**

☆☆ Connect for Success Resource Hub ☆☆

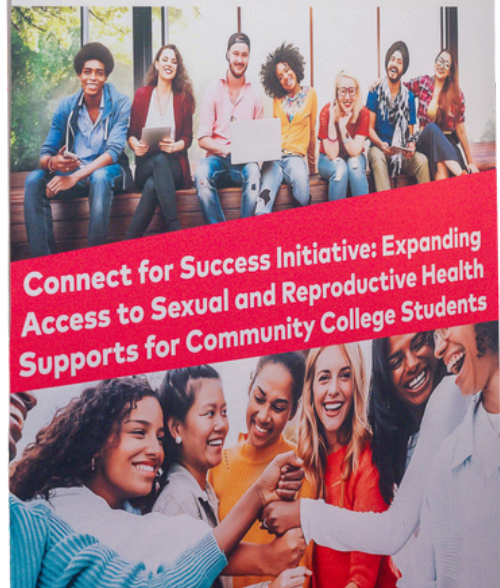
Listed below are national resources to better support students' basic sexual and reproductive health needs.

- **Abortion Finder**
 - features the most comprehensive directory of trusted (and verified) abortion service providers and assistance resources in the United States.
- **ACHA Community College Health Coalition**
 - A network for members who provide community college health programs and services.
- **Campus Pride**
 - A national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization for student leaders and campus groups working to create a safer college environment for LGBTQ students.
- **Elevated Access**
 - A non-profit organization that enables people to access healthcare by providing flights on private planes at no cost. Our volunteer pilot network transports clients seeking abortion or gender-affirming care across the United States.
- **If, When, How**
 - An abortion and pregnancy defense fund that provides free, confidential, legal services
- **Plan C**
 - Provides up-to-date information on how and where people in the U.S. are accessing at-home abortion pill options online.
- **Promoting Reproductive Health Care Access on Campus: Implementation Toolkit**
 - Provides guidance and relevant resources to help campus professionals navigate the changing landscape in reproductive health care and develop strategies to mitigate the impact of legislation that reduces access to comprehensive reproductive health care.



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Connect for Success Initiative: Expanding
Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health
Supports for Community College Students