



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Director's Corner



This past year has asked more of us than many imagined. Defending reproductive rights has required resolve in the face of loss, creativity amid constraint, and courage when the path forward felt uncertain. And still, this movement has not slowed. It has adapted, deepened, and grown stronger because of the people who continue to show up with purpose and conviction.

From June 25–27, that shared commitment came alive, as more than 90 leaders from higher education, public health, advocacy, and student organizations gathered in Washington, D.C, for the Connect for Success Symposium, hosted by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). With voices from every US region and geopolitical area, this convening was more than a conference: It was a declaration that reproductive health equity for community college students is not optional—it is foundational to student success.

Across sessions, we moved from vision to action. We lifted up bold, community-rooted solutions, students transformed lived experience into policy pathways, and we confronted the realities of a shifting political landscape. Lastly, lightning talks sparked possibility—advancing solutions to period poverty, expanding peer ambassador programs, strengthening queer-inclusive resources, and increasing STI access.

What emerged was momentum. What carried through was hope. In a time when the work can feel heavy, the Symposium affirmed the power of collective strategy, student leadership, and cross-sector collaboration. It reminded us that movements are built not only in moments of victory, but in moments of persistence—by people willing to imagine and fight for something better.

We are profoundly grateful for the labor, leadership, and care each of you brings to this work. Your efforts are reshaping systems, expanding access, and ensuring that student well-being remains at the center of educational equity. Together, we are building a national movement grounded in justice, dignity, and possibility.

As we look toward 2026, we do so energized and ready to level up. We will deepen partnerships, amplify student voices, and move with even greater clarity and power. The road ahead will not be easy—but it is one we are prepared to walk together. The future of reproductive health equity for community college students is being built now, and it is being built by all of us.

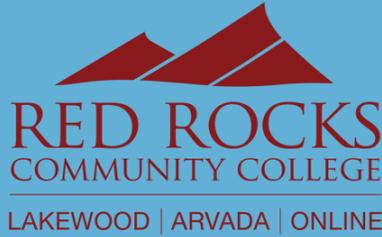
-Dr. Free

What's in this issue?

- Director's Corner
- New Faces, New Partners, New Chapters
- CFS Grantee Reproductive Health Impact at a Glance
- 2025 CFS Symposium Visual Recap
- Grantee Spotlight: WeARE
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KEEP READING

Congratulations to Our New Grantee Sites!



Red Rocks Community College



Family Health Center

Fairwell and Hello!

We'd like to thank **Emme Rogers** and **Christine Clark** who have both done incredible work on Connect for Success.

We are also pleased to introduce **Rachael Tessema**, who is thrilled to join the team and contribute to the work ahead.



CFS 2025 Grantee Reproductive Health Impact at a Glance

Menstrual Care

- **Solano’s Reproductive Health Club (Solano CC)** opened a student led, fully furnished reproductive health resource center.
- **Frederick CC** created and supported 300+ students this year through Menstru-All, its discrete menstrual product delivery program.
- Seven grantees increased access to free menstrual products by offering pads and tampons in their on-campus bathrooms.

Queer-Inclusive Care

- Advocates for Reproductive Education (WeARE) supports LGBTQ+ groups by funding events like Drag Shows and PRIDE month activities while providing inclusive education materials.
- Truman Wellness Center at Truman CC expands queer-affirming care through community partnerships and inclusive, welcoming office signage.
- Bellevue College established a student-curated Queer Resource Library featuring sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming resources.

2025 PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Contraceptive Care

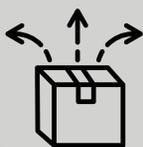
- Ohlone College started offering a Family Planning, Access, Care, and Treatment Program (FPACT) during spring 2025.
- Frederick CC surveyed 354 students on OTC contraception preferences to better meet student resource needs.

General Repro Care

- Take Control Initiative, in partnership with Tulsa Higher Education Consortium, partnered with 28 health to offer free virtual reproductive health care for community college students.
- Howard Community Health Department in partnership with Howard CC, launched Main Character Energy Campaign to promote the sexual health clinic on campus.
- Yellowhammer Fund completed a 30-stop Repro Raven bus tour across rural Alabama’s reproductive-supply deserts, including visits to colleges passing out menstrual and repro supplies.

Abortion Care

Alumni peer health educators authored a forthcoming post-Roe maternal health brief discussing abortion restrictions and maternal health, this was done through the Take Control Initiative, in partnership with Tulsa Higher Education Consortium.



Expanding Access: 2025 Resources Distribution Highlights

222,946
INTERNAL
AND
EXTERNAL
CONDOMS

64,700
PACKETS OF
LUBRICANTS

70,764
PLAN B
PILLS

64,889
PREGNANCY
TESTS

3,923
MENSTRUAL
CARE KITS

324 PACKS
OF BIRTH
CONTROL

HIGHLIGHTS

2025 CFS Symposium: A Visual Recap Eaton Hotel, Washington, DC



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

WeARE (ADVOCATES FOR REPRODUCTIVE EDUCATION)

Brainerd, Minnesota



What The Program Offers

WeARE offers a flexible, stigma-reducing STI testing model, which is especially useful for students taking more online classes post-pandemic. The program offers:

- **9 Drop Box locations** across two campuses.
- Pick up → self-test → drop off at **any time**.
- **Completely discreet** (dorm, restroom, or at home).
- No appointments, no clinic hours, just access.



Why This Program Matters

- **4.9%** chlamydia positivity rate in 2024.
- County ranks **top 10** of 87 in Minnesota for gonorrhea (ages 15–19).
- Rural students face limited providers and transportation barriers.
- The Drop Box system gives students easy access and links them to WeARE’s clinic for follow-up care.



Community Partnerships

- **Youth Advisory Council (YAC)** is a student-led group guiding program design and outreach.
- Collaborations with **women’s shelter, warming shelter, teen group homes, and youth-serving organizations** expand reach and reduce barriers.



Goals for the Year Ahead

- Grow the **“Help Yourself Shelf”** to distribute more SRH supplies: pregnancy tests, EC, condoms, etc.
- Improve follow-up pathways for faster connection to treatment, counseling, and support.
- Expand Drop Boxes in the community to libraries, shelters, and other public hubs.



How Connect for Success Helps

Connect for Success provides space to share the Drop Box model, learn from peers, and bring home new strategies that strengthen access for rural students.

Final Note

“The connections we make here are so valuable as we look at expanding this model. And truly—thank you for hosting such an amazing conference and creating the space for these conversations.” - Chloe Baker (WeARE)

Grantee Spotlight

TAKE CONTROL INITIATIVE Tulsa, Oklahoma



What the Program Offers

- The Take Control Initiative (TCI) provides free and reduced-cost birth control in Tulsa County and emergency contraception statewide.
- Its main postsecondary effort is the Peer Health Educator (PHE) Program—a paid cohort where college students lead SRH projects, host campus programs, organize resource fairs, and complete passion projects that address community needs.



Why This Program Matters

- Students face major barriers to SRH care, including limited education, transportation, child care, and cost.
- TCI helps bridge these gaps through free rides, education, and access to free or low-cost contraception, ensuring people can receive care that aligns with their needs and identities.



Community Partnerships

- TCI works closely with the Tulsa Higher Education Consortium, which brings together leaders from nine higher education institutions and seven affiliated organizations.



Goals for the Year Ahead

A major focus is expanding support for rural tribal students, who face heightened access challenges due to distance from care. With grant support, TCI will:

- Provide telehealth services from rural campuses.
- Offer regular programming to ensure students know and use available resources.



How Connect for Success Helps

Connect for Success funding will:

- Expand telehealth access for community college students living more than an hour from Tulsa.
- Support new, culturally grounded approaches to strengthen SRH services for tribal communities.