

Please read below and attached!! As of now (due to budget cuts) we have lost our on site clinic!! This is a vital part to our program that keeps prenatal care available and attendance issues down!! Please help us by contacting the Governor and Legislators urging them to find a way to keep this clinic available to our teen moms!!!!

Thank you!!

*Randa Pirrong
Family and Consumer Science
National Board Certified Teacher
Emerson High School
Oklahoma City Public Schools*

From: Sharon Rodine [<mailto:srodine@oica.org>]

Sent: Wednesday, May 20, 2009 12:47 PM

To: Sharon Rodine

Subject: IMPORTANT: EMERSON AND MHP UPDATE

ACTION ALERT UPDATE (Noon, May 20):

This morning, the Oklahoma Senate passed the OSDH budget, without the line item funding that has provided important health education programs for the hundreds of students in the teen parent programs at the Emerson School (OKC district) and Margaret Hudson Program (Tulsa and Broken Arrow districts). Reinstating this funding in the OSDH budget, where it has been for years, is not an option.

We need a new option:

Please send the emails and make the calls to legislators, as outlined below, stressing the urgent need to find another bill in which to insert this funding.

Please make calls and send emails to the Governor's Office and First Lady's Office, urging the Governor to use his discretionary funds to reinstate these programs, if the legislature does not find another source.

***** YOUR CALLS AND EMAILS HELPED!!!** During the House discussion last night, Rep. Jeannie McDaniels (D-Tulsa) said she had been receiving lots of calls and asked about the funding. During the Senate discussion this morning, Sen. Andrew Rice (D-OKC) made an eloquent speech about the need to provide this funding and serve these young people... and Sen. Debbe Leftwich and Sen. Connie Johnson voiced their strong support (both are D-OKC).

We have 2-1/2 days left before the legislature adjourns for this session. Please keep the calls and emails going – as fast and as many as possible... and recruit more people to help!

Attached are recent fact sheets (2007 data). If Oklahoma wants to reduce poverty and school dropouts, improve child health/education outcomes and increase family economic stability... these programs are a small investment with huge returns. THANKS!

**ACTION ALERT – We need your help to save critical health education programs for pregnant and parenting teens
at the Emerson School (OKC) and Margaret Hudson Program (Tulsa and Broken Arrow)!**

Last night, the Oklahoma House passed the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) budget, without the line item funding for the health education programs at the Margaret Hudson Program for teen parents in Tulsa (\$34,091) and the Emerson Teen Parent Program in OKC (\$107,372). These important programs have been funded by the state for years. The OSDH appropriation bill passed overwhelmingly in the House and now goes to the Senate, where it is anticipated to pass by a wide margin. At this point, it's gone re: the OSDH budget, and we need to find another avenue to reinstate this funding... ASAP!

In the very few days left, we must FLOOD the Governor's office and legislature with emails and calls (contact info below). Emails are best, as the legislators are sitting at their desks on the House and Senate floors working their emails. Follow the emails with calls.

Contacts should be focused on...

Asking Rep. Cox, Chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health, and other Representatives and Senators where the funding can be found to keep these programs alive, since it has been removed from the OSDH budget.

Asking key leadership to find a bill that could still include this funding. There are often "shell bills" (empty) waiting to fix situations such as this. (Recently, the legislature completely eliminated R.E.A.P, the program for rural communities, i.e. meals to the elderly, assistance with agriculture improvement etc. – however, the impact was so grave that rural community advocates demanded that money be found...and they found it.)

Asking the Governor to use his discretionary funding for these programs.

Asking Mrs. Henry to make the case on our behalf.

Articulating that these programs will end if this funding isn't available... there are NO OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING! Oklahoma County (1,605 teen births) and Tulsa County (1,175 teen births) comprised 37% of all teen births in the state in 2008 – nearly 2 out of 5. Eliminating the MHP and Emerson programs doesn't make this situation more "fair"; limited resources need to go to the priority areas where the numbers and rates are the highest.

Reminding everyone that they are INCREASING child poverty, poor health outcomes, family instability, school dropouts, welfare expenditures and an unskilled workforce in Oklahoma by removing these important health education programs from the youngest, most vulnerable pregnant girls and teen parents.

(A reminder, if you work at an organization or agency where you cannot make these calls or send these emails, please use your own phones and computers... or find another location that is appropriate.)

EMAIL AND CALL THE FOLLOWING ASAP:

Governor Brad Henry's office: <http://www.gov.ok.gov/contact.php>

The Governor has discretionary funding which might be applied here. Call and email.

First Lady Kim Henry's office: http://www.gov.ok.gov/contact_first_lady.php

We need her help – former teacher, mother of three daughters, cares about young people! Call and email.

For the emails/phone numbers for the Oklahoma House members:

<http://www.okhouse.gov/Members/MemberListing.aspx>

They are reading emails at their desks on the House floor – email first, then follow with a call. Some key leaders include:

- **Rep. Doug Cox** (M.D., R-Grove), Chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Health
- **House Speaker Chris Bengtson** (R-Tulsa)
- **Rep. Lucky Lamons** (D-Tulsa)
- **Rep. Mark McCullough** (R-OKC)
- **Any others in your area**, remembering that the Republicans are in control of the House so Dems have little influence... but contact anyway

For emails/phone numbers for the Oklahoma Senate members: <http://www.lsb.state.ok.us/>

They are reading emails at their desks on the Senate floor – email first, then follow with a call. Some key leaders include:

- **Sen. Brian Crain** (R-Tulsa) – supports prevention and the PSI program

- **Sen. President Pro-Tem, Glenn Coffee** (R-Edmond)
- **Sen. Clark Jolley** (R-Edmond)
- **Sen. Jim Wilson** (D-Tahlequah) – supports teen pregnancy prevention
- **Any others in your area...** or the whole list, remembering that Republicans control the Senate.

OKLAHOMA ALERT: TEEN BIRTHS ARE RISING...AGAIN!

In recent years, Oklahoma has invested few resources, little funding and little training in teen pregnancy and STD prevention programs. As a result, the slow but steady decrease in teen births and birth rates that occurred from 1991 through 2005 reversed itself in 2006 and continued to increase in 2007. Between 2005 and 2006, births to teens in Oklahoma increased by over 500, with another increase of over 250 births in 2007.

Number of Births to Oklahoma Teens

<u>Ages</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007*</u>
14 and younger	104	113	96	93
15- 17	2,145	2,020	2,280	2,293
18- 19	4,704	4,662	4,944	5,230
TOTAL	6,953	6,795	7,320	7,616

*Oklahoma Vital Statistics, Preliminary Data

This is not good news for Oklahoma's young people. It is not good news for our state's future – for education, health costs, the workforce or the economy.

Oklahoma must begin focusing serious attention and resources on teen pregnancy prevention programs and strategies that have been shown to be effective in...

- Delaying/preventing the onset of sexual activity
- Having sexually active teens understand how to avoid pregnancy and STDs
- Helping pregnant and parenting teens avoid rapid, repeat births

***It is critical that we begin to put what works...
to work in Oklahoma!***

For more information, contact:
Sharon Rodine, Youth Initiatives Director
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy
srodine@oica.org

11/08



[TPP exec su....pdf \(143 KB\)](#)