

# **Addressing Unplanned Pregnancy Prevention among College Students: A Guide for Mississippi Colleges**



Access this guide online at  
[womensfoundationms.org/advocacy/pregnancy-prevention-a-guide-for-community-colleges](http://womensfoundationms.org/advocacy/pregnancy-prevention-a-guide-for-community-colleges)

## Addressing Unplanned Pregnancy Prevention among College Students: A Guide for Mississippi Colleges (As of August 14, 2015)

[Senate Bill No. 2563](#), passed by the Mississippi Legislature and signed by Governor Phil Bryant during the 2014 Legislative Session, directs the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Executive Director of the Mississippi Community College Board to develop a plan of action to address the prevention of unintended and unmarried pregnancies among older teens on our college and university campuses. In April 2015, the Legislature appropriated a total of \$250,000 in the FY 2016 budget for community colleges to address unplanned pregnancy.

This guide is intended as a resource for Mississippi community colleges as they develop and implement plans for how to use these funds. It provides:

- ✓ Background about unplanned pregnancy among older teens and young adults,
- ✓ What to keep in mind when working with them to postpone pregnancy/parenting (or postpone an additional pregnancy) until they have completed their education,
- ✓ Specific ways The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy can support the kinds of activities referenced in SB 2563.



*Notes: The guide contains a number of links and is therefore best viewed online. To access the guide, go to [www.womensfoundationms.org/advocacy/pregnancy-prevention-a-guide-for-community-colleges](http://www.womensfoundationms.org/advocacy/pregnancy-prevention-a-guide-for-community-colleges). Unless otherwise noted, data are national; sources are available upon request.*

### Reality check

- By 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 7 in 10 students in MS have had sex.
- 23% of births to 18–19 year olds in MS are to women who already have at least one child.
- 3/4 of 18–24 year olds in the U.S. have had sex in the past 12 months.
- 68% of unmarried women in their twenties reported having sex in the past 3 months.
- Sex, relationships, and pregnancy are very real in the lives of college students. [Here](#) is a short video of college students talking about unplanned pregnancy.

### Many students are already parents

- 31% of female community college students in MS reported having a child under 18
- Nationally, one-quarter of college students are parents.
- Number of unmarried or single parents among undergraduate students has nearly doubled in past 20 years.

### Support and prevention are complementary

- Students with children face unique challenges and need support to complete their education, including child care, financial pressures, time/scheduling stress, and health care.

- One survey found: students with children were twice as likely not to complete post-secondary education as those without children.
- For many, another child makes it that much harder.

**Why does unplanned pregnancy matter to colleges?**

*Retention and completion:*

- At community colleges, unplanned births account for nearly 1 in 10 dropouts among female students and 7% of dropouts among students overall.
- 61% of women who have children after enrolling in community college do not finish their education.

*Student Achievement:*

- Students suffer increased emotional and financial stress, which can impede academic performance.

*Costs:*

- Colleges have additional operating costs through increased demand for child care and related support services.

**Gap between students’ aspirations and actions**

- 82% of community college students reported that having a child while still in school would make it harder to accomplish their goals.
- More than 3/4 of students say that preventing pregnancy is very important to them, yet 1/3 of these students said it was likely they would have sex without using birth control in the next three months.
- 46% of MS female community college students under age 40 report they don’t use birth control/contraception.

**Insights about MS community college students**

From [\*Securing a Better Future: A Portrait of Female Students in Mississippi’s Community Colleges\*](#), released by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research and the Women’s Foundation of MS:

- Reasons female students with children under 18 said they took time off from school:
  - Financial considerations 43%
  - Became pregnant and/or had a baby 38%
  - Insufficient child care 24%
  - Sick child or children 22%
- 41% of students with children under 18 have taken one or more breaks from school.

**Things to Keep in Mind**

- Most college students are 18 or older, which means they are legally adults and are given many responsibilities.
- It’s not about you—it’s about your students and messages that work for them. Meet your students where they are and listen to them.
- Don’t reinvent the wheel—use existing materials and resources, and wherever possible, things that have been evaluated
- Recognize faculty may not have expertise/comfort with pregnancy prevention.
- The topic of preventing unplanned pregnancy is relevant for both men and women, and for those who are already parents, as well as those who are not parents.

<b>Tips for language</b>	
<b>OUT</b>	<b>IN</b>
Teens	Students
Teenagers	Young adults
Teen pregnancy	Unplanned pregnancy
Preventing	Postponing/planning

There are a variety of strategies to address the areas outlined by the SB 2563 Working Group:

“I have learned it is better to wait until being in a relationship with someone who he/she is married to before thinking about being involved sexually. And also to stay abstinent until marriage, than being involved with unplanned pregnancies.”

- Female student from Miami Dade College (FL) after completing the online lessons

**a. Incorporation of unplanned pregnancy prevention into student success courses and orientation.**

There are free online lessons that can be used in first-year experience, college success, and orientation. Published by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, the three lessons in *Preventing Unplanned Pregnancy and Completing College* can help students address information gaps and take action to prevent unplanned pregnancy. The lessons are designed to help students understand the impact of unplanned pregnancy on their educational goals, their social lives, their significant relationships, and their finances. Students learn about

various birth control methods; select the most appropriate method(s) for their values, lifestyles, and relationships; and create an action plan to decrease their chances of unplanned pregnancy.

By offering the lessons, instructors can provide students with valuable information, without needing to become experts on these topics themselves or using class time. Each of the three lessons may be completed in approximately 30 minutes. For more information about the free online lessons, visit the [Faculty Page](#).

In addition, The National Campaign can provide faculty a free, customized training webinar that will show a brief demonstration and provide tips on how they can be easily incorporated into courses.

The online lessons have been used by thousands of students in at least 15 colleges around the country and [evaluated](#) with nearly 3,000 students at four community colleges in FL, GA, OH, and TX. This research has found consistently positive shifts in students’ knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intent, as well as positive qualitative feedback from faculty and students. If a college is interested in evaluating their efforts, there is a version of the online lessons that includes built-in pre- and post-surveys and The National Campaign can make these data available to the college—please inquire with The National Campaign (contact information below) if interested.

**b. Integration of information about the prevention of unplanned pregnancy into academic courses, if and when appropriate.**

As part of Make It Personal: College Completion (MIPCC), a joint project between the American Association of Community Colleges and The National Campaign, there are free [course templates](#) available for select disciplines. However, it can also be helpful to allow faculty to be creative

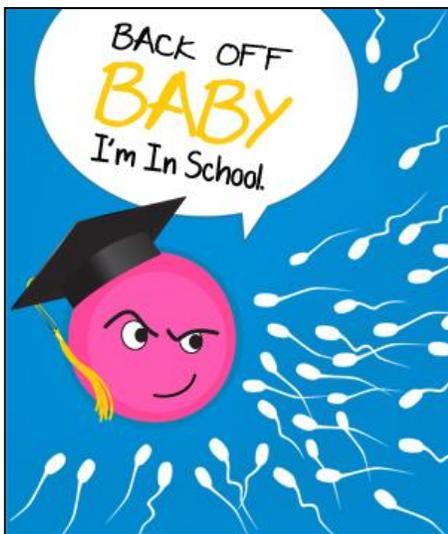
**Disciplines that have integrated preventing unplanned pregnancy:**

- Anatomy and Physiology
- Biology
- Business Management
- College 101/College Success
- Communications
- Counseling
- Education
- English
- English as a Second Language
- Ethics
- Health and Wellness
- Kinesiology
- Mental Health
- Philosophy
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Reading
- Science
- Social Work
- Sociology
- Speech
- Statistics
- Women’s History

with how they incorporate the topic into their course(s). While this option requires more preparation than using the online lessons, faculty who have incorporated the topic of preventing unplanned pregnancy into academic courses have found that it is a very valuable experience. A statistics instructor who participated in MIPCC project said, “I found that having a topic to work toward enhanced my class and was well worth any extra time on my part...it brings the course to life so much more than having students gather data on random topics”

For more information, there is a [report](#) about the project, including case studies from several colleges. This [video](#) captures faculty sharing their experience. The National Campaign, along with AACC’s former director of service learning, Gail Robinson, is available to assist colleges that wish to pursue this option.

### c. Identification of opportunities to raise awareness and provide resources about the prevention of unplanned pregnancies across the student population.



**1. Posting information on campus:** It’s possible for each college to create customized materials, but The National Campaign has several materials available that feature its sister site, an online birth control support network, Bedsider.org, that appeal to college students:

- **Posters:** There are several designs available. In addition, The National Campaign can share a high-resolution image of the “Back Off Baby” (graphic on the left) that the college can use to create customized posters or giveaways (note that this graphic was created by a community college student in her graphic design course).
  - **Pamphlets:** There are informational items, including the Visual Guide to Birth Control that shows all the available methods of birth control.
- **Palm Cards:** There are palm cards that feature fun, catchy facts and direct students to visit Bedsider.org.

All the materials above are available at [Providers.Bedsider.org/order-materials](http://Providers.Bedsider.org/order-materials). In addition, ETR Associates has materials for a variety of health topics, including birth control and pregnancy prevention, available on its [website](#).

**2. Residence halls:** There are many ways that content can be worked into programming in the dorms. For example, the resident advisors can host viewing parties with shows that feature unplanned pregnancy, followed by discussion. There are DVD copies of the shows *16 & Pregnant* and *Nine* available, and they come with discussion guides. Click [here](#) for *16 & Pregnant* and [here](#) for *Nine*. The MTV show *Virgin Territory* is also a good choice—those episodes are available to [stream online](#) for free, and could generate a good discussion as well. In addition, dorms serve as a perfect location to display posters and provide students with information.

**3. Student groups, including Phi Theta Kappa:** The topic of preventing unplanned pregnancy is an important and rewarding topic to address on the college campus, and PTK projects present several opportunities:

- Honors in Action
  - Theme 7: Health and Medicine as Frontiers
  - Theme 8: Exploring Political Economy
- College Project
- Personal Endeavor
- Hallmark of Service and Civic Engagement

The National Campaign has tools and resources that can support PTK members as well, including research and data, videos, Bedsider materials as mentioned above, and more. To see how students have previously focused on this topic, there is an [article](#) written by a former PTK chapter president who focused on preventing unplanned pregnancy for her award-winning projects.

**d. Identification of opportunities for existing students to reach out to younger teens to serve as mentors and /or role models of successful behaviors and healthy choices, including any opportunities for outreach during the summer vacation or during traditional K-12 after-school hours.**

As mentioned under Strategy C, PTK students are excellent ambassadors to bring the topic of preventing unplanned pregnancy to their fellow students on the college campus. However, they can also bring the topic to a younger audience. For example, The National Campaign has a companion website, [Stay Teen](#), which provides age-appropriate and accurate information to high-school-aged teens. PTK students can direct teens to visit the website while participating in outreach activities. Every May, Stay Teen hosts the National Day to Prevent Teen Pregnancy online Quiz, which gives teens the opportunity to think about how they would react in real-life situations. Hosting quiz parties would be a perfect opportunity for teens to think about how experiencing a pregnancy would affect their life. The National Campaign also produces fun giveaways for The National Day.

**e. Identification of any private or federal grants available to address the prevention of unplanned pregnancy and promote student success, including any partnerships necessary to compete for such grants.**

While specific funding opportunities to apply for federal funding are limited to address these topics among college students, there may be organizations in your community already receiving funding that you could partner with. You may consider reaching out to these groups to explore opportunities to partner. You can also explore foundations that are supporting community college completion activities, and propose including unplanned pregnancy among your completion strategies. In addition, consider including this topic in funding proposals or initiatives focused on improving economic opportunity and mobility. The National Campaign periodically shares information about funding opportunities they learn about through their [EGRAM, Federal Funding, and Colleges updates](#).

**f. Collaboration with community health centers and/or federally qualified health centers to promote access to care.**

While two-year colleges rarely have health services on campus, there are often places in the community where students can receive free or low-cost health care services, including contraceptive care. Your college may be in reasonable proximity to community health centers, local health departments, and/or Title X family planning clinics. For a comprehensive list in your area, visit [Bedsider.org/where\\_to\\_get\\_it](#). In addition, it is recommended that you establish relationships with one or more of these clinics, as they can offer expertise on contraception and other sexual health issues, and

representatives may be interested in coming to the college campus to make students aware that the clinics are available to serve them.

- Nearby community health centers, also called FQHCs (federally qualified health centers), exist to serve their communities. Therefore, community health centers must provide health services to all community residents, regardless of their financial or insurance status. For more information, visit the [Mississippi Primary Health Care Association](#).
- To locate a local department, go to [Mississippi Department of Health Public Health Districts](#)
- To locate a Title X funded clinic, go to [Mississippi Title X Family Planning Database](#) (Note: to use this database, you do not need to log in—simply scroll down and select Mississippi in the drop-down menu under State to start your search)
- Many students with family income below 194% of the federal poverty level will qualify for free family planning services through Mississippi’s [Medicaid family planning waiver](#). For more information, check out the printable “Care for Yourself” [brochure](#).

**g. Identification of child care, transportation, financial aid and other challenges specific to existing single parents.**

Colleges that have Single Stop, or a similar program that connects students to community resources, have an additional opportunity to address this topic. Students are often eligible for benefits and support services that they do not know about, including contraceptive care. This interaction is an important chance to connect students to this important resource.

**h. Identification of other such topics or issues relating to the prevention and reduction of unplanned pregnancies among older teens.**

Another useful strategy is to piggyback on existing programs with related subjects. For example, if there is an event related to STI prevention or programming about sexual assault as part of Title IX, it might be beneficial to also address preventing unplanned pregnancy. In addition, athletics programs and male achievement programs provide important opportunities to address this topic.

**Other resources:**

- An easy way to provide students with information is to refer them to a website with up-to-date, accurate information about how to prevent unplanned pregnancy and where to go to obtain healthcare. For example, [Fact Not Fiction Mississippi](#), a project of The Women’s Foundation of Mississippi, is a great starting place. Colleges could refer to this resource in their online orientations, websites, courses, and other places where it will help their students make smart decisions. Another example is [Student Sex Life](#), a page on The National Campaign’s Bedsider.org, which makes the connection between unplanned pregnancy and a student’s ability to complete their education. It directs students to helpful resources about birth control, connects faculty and staff to research and resources they can use to help students, and directs providers to resources they can use in campus health centers. It’s a one-stop shop for anyone on a college campus. We invite you to check it out and share with others on your campus.

- The National Campaign's [fact sheet](#), *Briefly: Unplanned Pregnancy Among College Students and Strategies to Address It*, provides additional information.
- An [article](#) from the League for Innovation in the Community College by former AACC president George Boggs, connecting unplanned pregnancy to college completion, and it provides ideas about the different ways the topic of preventing unplanned pregnancy can be addressed on a college campus.
- The more we know about young people's sexual experiences and how they feel about them, the better we are at communicating with them about risks, consequences, and contraception. We also know that delaying sex, by even a year or two, can protect younger teens from many increased sexual risks. The survey results in [Virgin Territory](#) show what young men and women thought, what they remembered, and how they felt about the first time they had sex, and how they feel about it now.
- For all resources available for college faculty, visit [TheNationalCampaign.org/colleges](http://TheNationalCampaign.org/colleges).

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, founded in 1996. It is funded primarily through private foundations. The National Campaign has been working with community colleges to help their students prevent unplanned pregnancy since 2008, and is happy to assist with the above strategies. To learn more, contact Chelsey Connolly, Senior Manager of College Initiatives, at [cconnolly@thenc.org](mailto:cconnolly@thenc.org) or 202.478.8519.

The Women's Foundation of Mississippi is the only grantmaking and advocacy organization in Mississippi entirely dedicated to funding programs that improve the lives of women and girls statewide. Our mission is economic security for women. To learn more, contact Latisha Latiker, Program Officer, at [latisha@womensfoundationms.org](mailto:latisha@womensfoundationms.org) or 601.326.3002.