

## Preventing HIV through Families

*Strengthening adolescents' abilities to adopt abstinence and safe sex practices*

The Pan American Health Organization's Adolescent Health and Development Unit has developed a new model of intervention with families to promote the adoption and maintenance of abstinence and safer sex practices for HIV prevention among adolescents. The model underscores the important role parents play in helping their children to master skills during earlier adolescence that will protect them from HIV infection. Interventions designed under this family-based model intend to increase parent's self-efficacy in talking about sexuality with their pre, early and middle adolescents. Additionally, by improving the family emotional climate and amount of leisure time spent together, these interventions will lead to adolescents positively interacting with their parents and considering their input regarding sexual practices. The Adolescent Health and Development Unit plans to disseminate the model in Latin American and Caribbean countries currently implementing family-based interventions for HIV prevention.



## Youth, Choices and Changes to Prevent HIV

*New document for designing successful programs*

Although public health interventions can successfully increase adolescents' and youth's knowledge about HIV, there is ample evidence that cognitive knowledge is not enough for a sustained change in behaviors. *Behavior Change* describes not only the shift from health-compromising behaviors to health-promoting behaviors, but is also the process by which adolescents adopt and maintain new behaviors. In a world immersed in the HIV epidemic and the glorification of sex, health promotion and prevention program developers are challenged to encourage youth to adopt and maintain safer sex practices. PAHO's Adolescent Health and Development Unit is producing a document that analyzes the most prominent behavior change and health promotion theories in use today with a developmental perspective. The document also proposes a series of developmental goals to be considered when promoting the adoption and maintenance of safer sex practices among adolescents. **Available in March 2003.**

## Youth-Centered HIV Counseling

A new counseling model based on the interests of adolescents, especially those at risk for acquiring HIV/AIDS and other STIs, is the focus of a document being developed by the PAHO Adolescent Health and Development Unit and the HIV/AIDS Program. The document provides an operational definition of transtheoretical counseling from a youth-centered perspective, and also focuses on care for youth already infected with the virus. A conceptual framework, guidelines and building blocks for the provision of adolescent counseling services are presented here for school counselors, psychologists, teachers, health professionals, physicians and social workers to draw from when developing their own programs. **Available in March 2003.**

# Links

- [www.familiesaretalking.org](http://www.familiesaretalking.org) (SIECUS parent/child communication about sexuality)
- [www.youthcoalition.org](http://www.youthcoalition.org) (Sexual and reproductive rights)
- [www.foro2003.sld.cu/ingles/index.html](http://www.foro2003.sld.cu/ingles/index.html) (II Latin American and Caribbean Forum on HIV/AIDS/STIs)



## What is a Sexually-Healthy Adolescent?

Adolescents vary in their social environments, economic circumstances, culture and sub-culture, gender and marital status. The characteristics of sexually-healthy youth vary as well, but can be summed up in the appreciation and respect for one's own body and the rights of others. The Adolescent Health and Development Unit's new publication, **Sexual Health and Development of Adolescents and Youth in the Americas: Program and Policy Implications**, argues for a paradigm shift for policy makers and program planners from stereotypes about "problem youth" to a new, positive outlook on young people, with a holistic approach to their development that includes sexuality. More than half a million youth, ages 15 to 24, are living with AIDS in Latin America and the Caribbean; the behaviors they adopt now and those they maintain throughout their sexual lives will determine the outcome of the HIV/AIDS epidemic for decades to come. Taking responsibility for one's behavior, assuming one's own sexual identity and orientation and respecting that of others, developing and maintaining meaningful relationships and enjoying and expressing one's sexuality throughout life are just some of the characteristics adolescents have a right to achieve. **Sexual Health and Development** focuses on the need of programs and policies to consider the richness and uniqueness of each adolescent subgroup in order to help youth develop a healthy sexuality. *Available in March 2003.*



**Talk soon. Talk often. Talk again.**  
--from SIECUS ad campaign encouraging  
parents to talk to their children about  
HIV/AIDS, STIs and sex

<http://www.siecus.org/media/press/press0029.html>

Join the  
**PAHO/SIDA/NORAD/  
YouthNet**  
**Latin American and  
Caribbean  
Youth HIV/AIDS  
Network!**  
Send name, profession,  
organization,  
mailing address and  
e-mail address  
to [singlets@paho.org](mailto:singlets@paho.org)

**HIV/AIDS Event Calendar**  
[www.calsplus.com/sida](http://www.calsplus.com/sida)

**Adolescent Health  
and Development Unit**

PAHO, 525 23rd St., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20037  
Phone: (202) 974-3502  
Fax: (202) 974-3640

Adolescent Health Advisor:  
Dr. Matilde Maddaleno  
E-mail: [maddalem@paho.org](mailto:maddalem@paho.org)

Internet: [www.adolesc.org](http://www.adolesc.org)  
and [www.paho.org](http://www.paho.org)

**HIV/AIDS Program**  
Phone: (202) 974-3842  
Fax: (202) 974-3643

HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator:  
Dr. Fernando Zacarías  
E-mail: [zacariaf@paho.org](mailto:zacariaf@paho.org)



**YouthNet**  
Partners in Reproductive Health & HIV Prevention