

Reproductive Health Education (RH Ed) is an educational newsletter from the Health Advocates at Finger Lakes Community Health. This newsletter covers all reproductive health topics, in addition to related services offered at our health centers.

## Mental Health Impacts Sexual Health

Studies show that young adults with serious mental health conditions tend to be affected by poor sexual health. For people of all genders, mental health plays a vital role in getting us turned on and keeping us that way. A study released by the National Institute of Health shows that in males, depressive symptoms are associated with lack of condom use while in females, these same symptoms were associated with having an STI. Young adults with mental health concerns were reported to have more unprotected sex as well as a higher frequency of STIs than those who are considered mentally healthy. When considering substance use in addition to poor mental health, these numbers increase significantly. Young people need a supportive environment in order for their mental health to thrive, so without that support, they are left without the proper tools to make healthy choices. As a society, we tend to desexualize young people who have mental health conditions and view them as unable to handle the responsibility of a sexual relationship. This is far from true. If given the proper tools, education, support, and access to health care, everyone can learn to make healthy decisions. Without access to such resources, some people may settle for a partner who doesn't respect their sexual limits or have sex with people they don't like. It's important that people are able to get information from reliable, trusted sources. The FLCH reproductive health program is dedicated to seeking out training and education opportunities and expanding our knowledge when it comes to such issues. We attend annual trainings with national partners, local trainings, and are always willing to share what we learn with our community. If you or your organization are interested in receiving training in this area, please don't hesitate to reach out.



Jennifer Monna, MS, PA-C  
Finger Lakes Community Health

## Provider Spotlight: What is Transgender?

“Transgender is an umbrella term for someone whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. Although there is increasingly more media attention on this, transgender is not a new phenomenon. In fact, documentation of trans people dates back to antiquity. It is important to understand that the gender a person identifies with does not predict their sexual orientation or their gender expression, which is the way someone chooses to present themselves to the world. People experience their gender identity in many ways and they can become aware of a trans identity at any age. Most trans people recall feeling like they did not fit with the gender assigned to them at birth and are persistent about their true identity. Some (but not all) trans people may choose to undergo a physical transformation through surgery and/or hormone replacement therapy. This is a private, personal decision. At Finger Lakes Community Health we provide high quality comprehensive primary care to LGBTQ+ patients and understand that each individual has unique healthcare needs. We offer transgender hormone replacement via tele-medicine in conjunction with Trillium Health in Rochester, NY. Trans people are in every community in the U.S.” **\*Educate yourself by visiting a website like [glad.org/transgender](http://glad.org/transgender).**

## Locations:

### Bath

**Community Health**  
117 E. Steuben St  
Bath, NY 14810  
(607) 776-3063

### Geneva

**Community Health**  
601B Washington St  
Geneva, NY 14456  
(315) 781-8448

### Newark

**Community Health**  
513 W. Union St  
Newark, NY 14513  
(315) 573-7577

### Ovid

**Community Health**  
7150 N. Main Street  
Ovid, NY 14521  
(607) 403-0065

### Penn Yan

**Community Health**  
112 Kimball Ave  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
(315) 536-2752

### Port Byron

**Community Health**  
60 Main St  
Port Byron, NY 13140  
(315) 776-9700

### Sodus

**Community Health**  
6692 Middle Rd  
Suite 2100  
Sodus, NY 14551  
(315) 483-1199

### Administrative Offices

14 Maiden Lane  
Penn Yan, NY 14527  
(315) 531-9102

# MAY is Teen Pregnancy PREVENTION Month

While teen pregnancy has decreased over the last decade, there are still vulnerable youth who remain at risk. Young people in Foster Care are twice as likely to become pregnant by age 19 than other people their age. Lesbian and bisexual teens also have twice the risk of unintended pregnancy as their heterosexual peers. Hispanic and black teen girls are 2-3 times more likely to give birth after an unexpected pregnancy than their white counterparts. Much of teen pregnancy can be attributed to lack of education when it comes to sexual health. Everyone deserves to have access to medically accurate information about reproductive health so that they can make healthy decisions. Time and time again, studies show that a teen's decisions about sex are highly influenced by their parents. However, educating young people about sexual health isn't just the responsibility of a parent. School systems, churches, youth groups, medical providers, and community groups should also be active in making sure that youth receive a well-rounded, medically accurate education when it comes to sex and contraception. Often when someone is uncomfortable talking about such issues, they may try to avoid these important conversations. This can be harmful and result in poor reproductive health decisions. If you are speaking with young people who say they know everything about sex, pregnancy, birth control, or STIs, ask them what exactly they know. It's extremely important to clarify

things, dispel myths, or simply add to their arsenal of knowledge, and it shows that you're engaged in the conversation and willing to recognize that they do have other sources of information. Pregnancy can be 100% preventable with the proper education and access to contraception, or by simply abstaining from sex altogether. At FLCH, we recommend using a hormonal method and a barrier method of contraception to ensure protection from both STIs and unintended pregnancy. Joint education between key role models can also ensure a well-rounded education. When discussing this topic, it helps to use the 'rule of three.' We don't always hear something correctly the first time, so we should repeat it. Even then, we can miss some important information, so repeating or clarifying something a third time can really help create a sense of understanding about a topic. Encouraging open and honest conversations about sex and contraception is vital for decreasing the rate of unintended teen pregnancy. An unexpected pregnancy, regardless of one's age, comes with quite a high cost not only for health insurance companies and health care providers, but for communities as well. It can decrease access to education and financial earnings, increases the need for social programs such as Medicaid, and can put a lot of stress on one's relationships. This is why FLCH is so dedicated to providing education to adults and youth alike regarding sexual health.

## Where Are We (FLCH) This Month?

- **May 1st:** Wayne Action for Racial Equality (WARE), Sodus
- **May 1st:** Reproductive Health Education (STI/Contraception), Prattsburgh High School
- **May 2nd:** Finger Lakes Community College, Newark
- **May 2nd:** Tier 2 Meeting, Penn Yan
- **May 3rd:** Reproductive Health Review Committee Meeting, Geneva
- **May 4th:** Ontario Probation Department, Canandaigua
- **May 12th:** Wayne Health Improvement Partnership (WHIP), Newark
- **May 18th:** Wellness Fair (IEC employees), Newark
- **May 18th:** Southern Tier Sexual Health Coalition, Bath (10am)  
Finger Lakes Sexual Health Coalition, Canandaigua (2:15pm)
- **May 22nd:** Reproductive Health Education (STI/Contraception), Bloomfield High School
- **May 24th:** Health & Wellness Fair, Newark High School
- **May 24th:** Finger Lakes STD Update Training, Rochester

*\*Would you like us to visit your program or school to provide evidence based programming on pregnancy prevention, STI prevention, healthy relationships and more? For more information go to: [www.localcommunityhealth.com](http://www.localcommunityhealth.com) or contact us today to schedule a time!*



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