



Sheila Dixon

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Mayor and Health Department Convene Meeting to Develop
City-Wide Strategy to Reduce Teenage Pregnancy***

Baltimore, MD (July 27, 2009) – Mayor Sheila Dixon joined the Baltimore City Health Department, Healthy Teen Network, and the Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute in leading a discussion with community leaders on implementing a city-wide strategy to reduce teenage births in Baltimore City.

“We know that babies born to teen mothers are twice as likely to suffer poor outcomes,” said Mayor Dixon. “This meeting today is the critical first step toward not only reducing teenage pregnancy but also ensuring that Baltimore’s babies lead long, healthy and productive lives.”

After a 15 year decline, teen birth rates in Baltimore began rising in 2006. From 2006 – 2007, births among teens ages 15 -17 increased by 15%. The rate of teen births in Baltimore was 66.4 per 1,000 in 2007, almost double the state-wide rate in Maryland.

“Teen pregnancy and parenting are major factors for high school dropout and impact the entire community,” said Assistant Commissioner of Health Dr. Melissa Houston. “This meeting will serve as a call to action and generate support among our stakeholders.”

The goal of this meeting is to establish a multidisciplinary collaborative to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan to reduce teen births in Baltimore City. Healthy Teen Network, a national organization based in Baltimore and one of the nation’s leading voices in teen pregnancy prevention, will lead the collaborative.

“With the recent change in administration and the new opportunities it provides for addressing the public health issue of teen pregnancy, the Baltimore City Health Department is wise to initiate the development of this plan” said Dr. Patricia Paluzzi, President/CEO of Healthy Teen Network. Healthy Teen Network has conducted an initial needs and resource assessment, which will be presented at the meeting.

Meeting attendees were invited to help identify other city resources to be included in the strategic plan. Johns Hopkins Urban Health Institute will serve as an important partner in this project, bringing with them invaluable experience working with community partners

exploring ways that the research, teaching, and clinical expertise of the University can be better harnessed for the benefit of the residents of Baltimore.

For more information about the teen pregnancy prevention collaborative, please contact the Baltimore City Health Department: Division of Maternal and Child Health, (410) 396-1834.

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