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## **SEXUAL HEALTH RISK DISPARITIES IDENTIFIED IN UNDERSERVED YOUTH**

*RAAPS Survey Identifies Higher Incidence of Sexual Health Risks among Disadvantaged American Adolescents*

**ANN ARBOR, Mich., February 11, 2015** - Over 750 adolescents in disadvantaged neighborhoods across Michigan were screened using the [RAAPS Sexual Health \(SH\)](#) screening system, revealing a significantly higher incidence of sexual health risks, mental health issues and related risk behaviors. Preliminary data analysis revealed several concerning trends and disparities, including:

- More high-risk sexual behaviors than “average” - with multiple sexual partners and failure to use protection during sex
- Less than half had received appropriate sexually transmitted infectious disease screenings - while 1 in 4 report a history of Chlamydia
- This population is failing in school; 2 out of 3 have a school suspension and over one third exhibit poor academic performance
- Almost 1 in 5 struggle with mental health issues and lack emotional support
- One tenth have been in physical danger - through abusive relationships or due to a lack of housing

American adolescents are participating in more diverse high-risk behaviors, at an earlier age than ever before. To impact this trend, healthcare providers and professionals working with adolescents must address a myriad of complex, contributing factors. But most importantly, before risk behaviors can be reduced - they must first be identified. RAAPS Sexual Health (SH) provides an effective risk identification and reduction system designed especially to address the unique needs of adolescents.

RAAPS SH is a web-based standardized screening and counseling system which identifies not only the risky sexual behaviors leading to STI and unplanned pregnancy but the inter-related factors contributing most to unsafe sexual decision making. These factors include: history of abuse, dating violence, depression, sexting, academic success, and lack of supportive adult relationships. RAAPS SH also provides evidence-based messaging to support effective counseling of the identified risks.

Dr. Jennifer Salerno, Founder of [Possibilities for Change](#) - the parent company for RAAPS SH, describes the need for sexual health screening among all youth:

*“We developed RAAPS SH because of some disturbing new trends we were seeing in the standard RAAPS risk data. Things like teens having sex earlier, using protection less often, and rising rates of sexual and physical abuse. And unfortunately, the numbers among underserved youth were disproportionately higher. RAAPS SH is helping professionals*

*uncover these issues and provide more effective counseling to reduce risks and support teens in need.”*

For more information about the RAAPS data and sexual health disparities please download the RAAPS whitepaper: [“\*Sexual Health Risk and American Adolescents\*”](#)

*About Possibilities for Change (P4C)*

P4C was founded to help save the lives of adolescents and young adults. We believe in partnering with organizations to enhance the systems they use to improve care and affect positive behavior change. Our products and services support professionals in identifying and reducing risky behaviors.