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# SURVEYING STUDENTS: UNDERSTANDING YOUTH BEHAVIORS TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

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## Anonymous surveying of youth is needed in order to:

- **Understand** risk behaviors that lead to adverse health and social outcomes.
- **Assess** whether risk behaviors change over time.
- **Provide data** to inform policy and programming.
- **Evaluate** prevention programs to make sure they are working.
- **Be eligible for funding** for prevention programming in schools.

## Most states conduct the YRBS

- The majority of states already use the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (**YRBS**) including the sexual risk behavior questions.
- In 2013, 42 states participated in the YRBS, including Louisiana and nearby states such as Mississippi and Alabama.
- **Louisiana is one of four states** that did not include the sexual risk behavior questions.

## What is the YRBS?

- A school-based survey developed by the CDC and conducted every two years.
- The survey is conducted by the Department of Education in high schools throughout Louisiana.
- The YRBS monitors health risk behaviors that often lead to death and disability among youth:
  - Alcohol & Drug use
  - Tobacco use
  - Injuries & Violence
  - Nutrition
  - Physical Activity
  - **Sexual Risk Behavior**
- The survey is voluntary. Districts, schools, parents, and students all must agree to participate.
- The survey is **anonymous** and data is compiled at the state level; **data will never be reported for an individual student.**

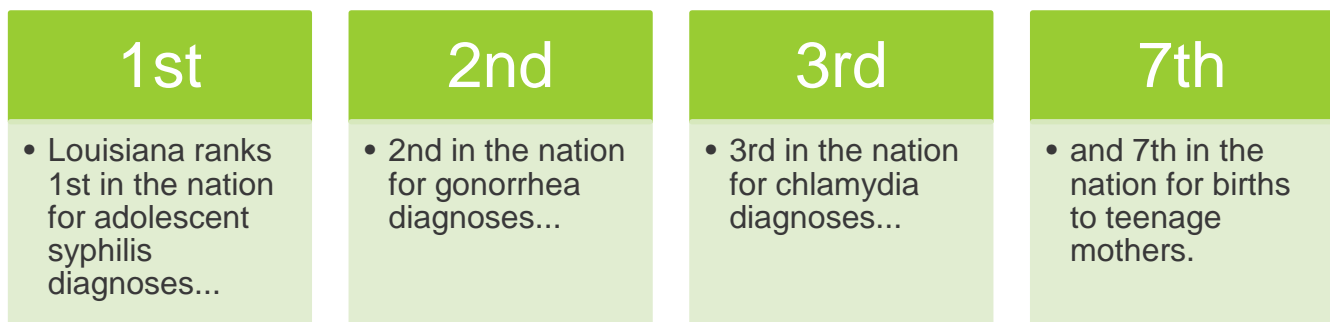
Learn more about the YRBS at [www.cdc.gov/yrbs](http://www.cdc.gov/yrbs).

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# ADOLESCENT SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN LOUISIANA

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Adolescent reproductive health is a critical, yet often neglected issue in Louisiana. Louisiana youth rank amongst the highest in the nation for teen births and sexually transmitted infections.<sup>1</sup>



## We Don't Know if Louisiana Follows National Trends

- According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), there was a 16% increase from 1991 to 2013 in the number of high school students nationwide who had never had sexual intercourse.<sup>2</sup>
- Louisiana students are not included in this data, so we don't know if this trend holds true for young people in our state.
- From 1991 to 2013, the national teen birth rate dropped 57%, while the rate in Louisiana for the same time period dropped only 48%.<sup>3</sup>

We need to be able to anonymously survey Louisiana students about sexual risk behaviors to fully understand the poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes faced by adolescents in our state.

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<sup>1</sup> SIECUS. *Louisiana State Profile Fiscal Year 2015*. Retrieved October 3, 2016, from Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States: <http://siecus.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewPage&pageID=1577&nodeID=1>

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Trends in the Prevalence of Sexual Behaviors and HIV Testing National YRBS: 1991-2015*. Retrieved from YRBSS Results: [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/trends/us\\_sexual\\_trend\\_yrbs.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/trends/us_sexual_trend_yrbs.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Ventura, S. J., Hamilton, B. E., & Matthews, T. (2014, August 20). National and State Patterns of Teen Births in the United States, 1940-2013. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 63(4). Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr63/nvsr63\\_04.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr63/nvsr63_04.pdf)