

February 21, 2017

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS HILDA L. SOLIS AND SHEILA KUEHL

Despite historic reductions in teen child bearing, girls in foster care are still more likely to experience pregnancy and childbirth than their non-foster care peers. For teen parents in foster care, the consequences of early and unplanned pregnancy reverberate for generations. Indeed, many of the children of teen parents in foster care become involved in the foster care system themselves. The impact of early and unplanned pregnancy can be equally catastrophic for youth in the juvenile justice system and their children.

Research demonstrates early and unplanned pregnancy prevention is a unique component of long-term well-being. Preventing early and unplanned pregnancy is a means of counteracting the likelihood of diminished life outcomes that so many former system involved youth face. Addressing pregnancy prevention among system involved youth therefore requires a strategic approach that takes into account cultural values and emphasizes the impact of poverty, trauma and abuse.

The California Department of Social Services recently released “California’s Plan for the Prevention of Unintended Pregnancies for Youth and Non-Minor Dependents (“the plan”). This plan outlines the responsibilities of social workers and probation officers with respect to delivering reproductive health care and information to youth in foster care. The Department of Children and Family Services has started taking steps toward implementation of this plan. In furtherance of their efforts,

WE, THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Direct the Department of Children and Family Services and Probation, in consultation with the Health Agency (Health Services, Mental Health, Public Health), to report back on the following in 60 days:

1. The status of implementing The Plan’s mandates and guidance and when full implementation will be complete;
2. The development of a strategy, in collaboration with representatives from the foregoing Departments, and the advocacy community and at least one former foster youth (who may have experienced teen pregnancy/parenting), to

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- a. Explore the risk factors facing system involved youth, including both boys and girls, and strategies to overcome the stigma and challenges relating to early and unplanned pregnancy prevention;
 - b. Provide updates on innovative strategies and public-private collaboration to address early and unplanned pregnancy prevention; and
 - c. Make multi-disciplinary recommendations to inform a county-wide protocol to reduce early and unplanned pregnancies among system involved youth in accordance with best practices, age appropriate medical care and existing educational protocols, such as the California Healthy Youth Act.
3. The creation of a comprehensive communications plan, to be informed by the representatives identified above, and in collaboration with appropriate staff, for both DCFS and Probation, which emphasizes
 - a. The Plan's requirements as outlined for case workers and probation officers;
 - b. The current law on minor consent and confidentiality; and
 - c. The essential nature of facilitating and ensuring access to effective reproductive health services, with an emphasis on pregnancy prevention, among system-involved youth in a culturally competent and trauma informed manner.

WE FURTHER MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, direct the CEO and the Sacramento legislative team, in coordination with the Department of Children and Family Services, to advocate in support of SB 245 (Protecting Foster Youth, Sen. Connie Leyva) and keep the Board apprised of any progress on this bill.