

executive summary

Community-based organizations need increased support to provide relevant, inclusive and appropriate programming aimed at improving sexual health outcomes for the youth they serve. The increase in HIV and STI rates, and decrease in knowledge among youth, combined with the multiple and ever-changing needs of Toronto's diverse youth communities demonstrate a need to change the current state of sexual health services and information available to youth.

The goal of the Toronto Teen Survey (TTS) is to conduct research that will enrich both the quality and quantity of sexual health information available to Toronto teens and improve the ways in which sexual health promotion and care are delivered. Specific objectives are to:

- explore the sexual health services youth seek out in Toronto
- discover the access barriers youth face in seeking services
- learn where youth are getting their sexual health information
- ascertain what youth want and need in terms of sexual health information
- understand where youth want to get that information and in what formats
- investigate the similarities and differences between the needs of diverse youth communities

We adopted a community-based participatory research approach and involved teens in all aspects of the study. Between December 2006 and August 2007, we conducted 90 workshops in community-based settings, collecting 1,216 surveys from a diverse cross-section of youth aged 13–18+. As one of the largest and most diverse studies of young people's sexual health needs ever done in Canada, TTS provided a space for youth voices that are often unheard. In 2008, we held 13 focus groups with 80 service providers representing 55 agencies to discuss the research findings and brainstorm recommendations for change.

We are proud to share this report that highlights our key study findings with recommendations for the education, public health and community sectors. The next two pages summarize our key findings.

