

Beacon Therapeutic  
CHIPRA Team  
Connecting Teens to Coverage  
Chicago, IL




**Beacon Therapeutic: Diagnostic and Treatment Center**

Susan Reyna- Guerrero LCSW - President and CEO

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## How we Began:

- ▶ Beacon's first CHIPRA grant was for outreach to homeless families living in shelters across the Chicago metropolitan area.
  - ▶ During the course of our outreach to families, we discovered that there was a significant need for outreach assistance within the teen population.
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# Who Are They?

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Urban Institute, of all children in Illinois who are without insurance, 44.8% are between the ages of 13 - 18 years of age.

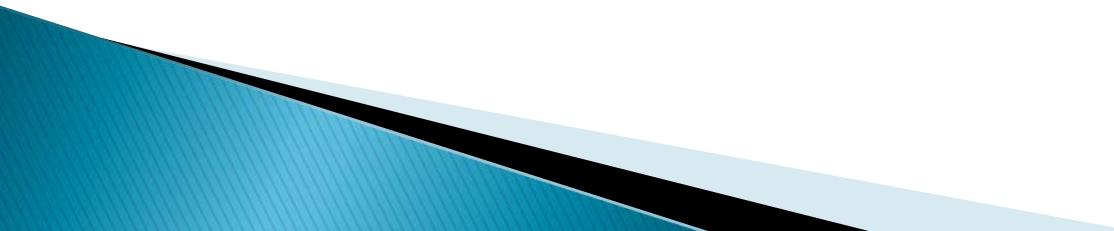
They are:

- ❖ teens who are living in shelters
- ❖ teens living with friends or extended family members
- ❖ teens living on the streets
- ❖ teens at home with their parents

# Barriers

- ▶ Barriers that are specific to the teen population include:
  - ▶ Do not think they need health coverage
  - ▶ Lack of knowledge of the way the “system” works
  - ▶ Difficulty navigating the system
  - ▶ Difficulty providing documentation
  - ▶ Transportation to a Community Service Center
  - ▶ For teens still at home, parents unwilling to sign paperwork or pay premiums

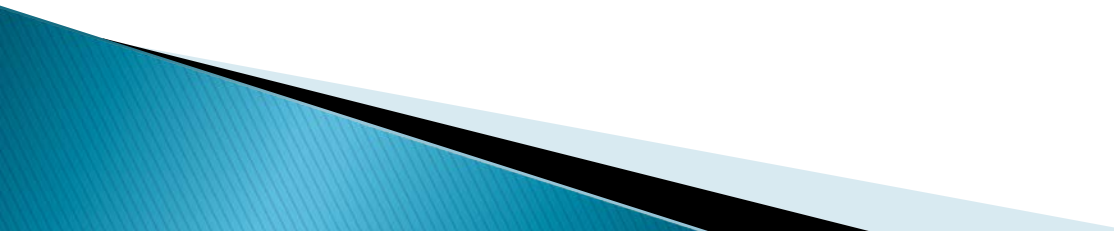
# Perceived Need:

- ▶ Often teens do not perceive a need for coverage. There are a fair amount of free medical services available to teens that offer STI and AIDS testing, treatment for STI's and some pregnancy prevention education/services.
  - ▶ Various Mobile Health vans and School Based Health Centers are also available to teens without medical coverage, and provide general health care as well as reproductive services.
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# Lack of Knowledge/Difficulty Navigating System:

- ▶ Teens are often not aware of how the system works and have difficulty navigating the rules and regulations of the system.
- ▶ If they are told they do not qualify or that their parent needs to apply they accept this from the 'authority figure'
- ▶ Often the system discourages teens from getting coverage

# Documentation:

- ▶ When teens leave home precipitously they do not grab all their documents
  - ▶ Because there are often strained or absent relationships with parents, parents do not cooperate with teens in allowing them access to their documents
  - ▶ Parents do not want to drop teens from their case as this will mean a reduction in benefits to the parent
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# Transportation:

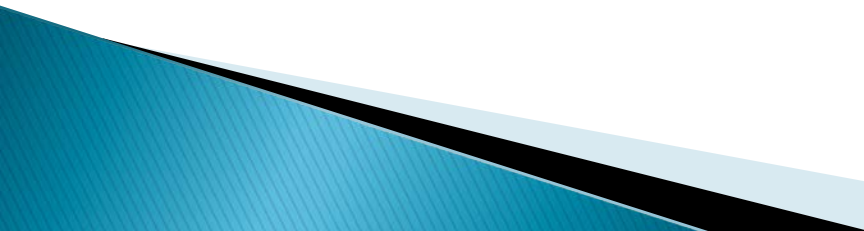
- ▶ Teens rarely have access to transportation to offices and if there is not a good city transportation system, they have difficulty getting to offices



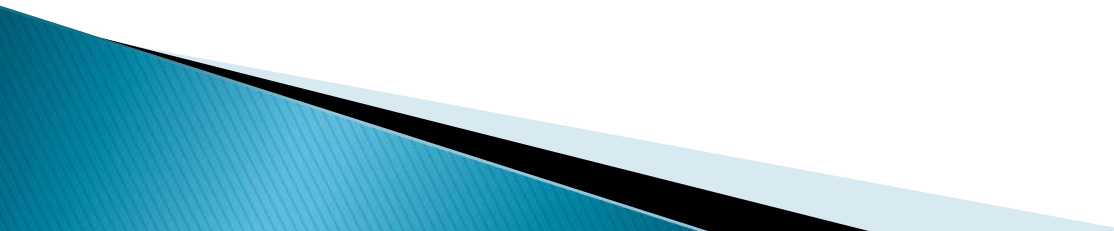
## Transience:

- ▶ In situations where teens are leaving their parents home, they may not be stably housed elsewhere; they may move from shelter to shelter or couch to couch

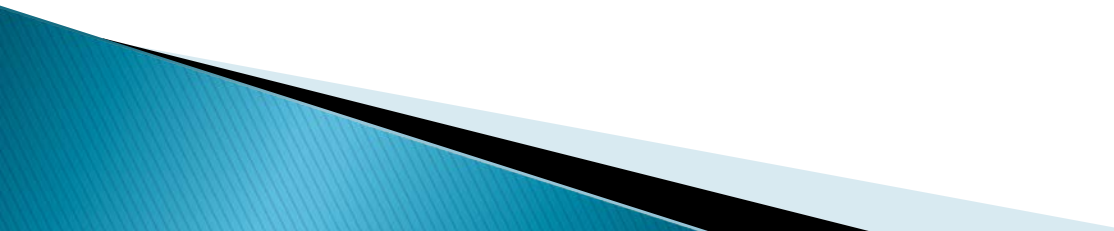
# Strategies to reach this population:

- ▶ Information and education targeted to the teen audience – materials appealing to teens (palm card, toothbrushes, condoms)
  - ▶ Use of electronic media (Facebook)
  - ▶ Use of e-mails for contact as addresses and cell numbers change (renewals)
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## Strategies cont'd:

- ▶ Network with agencies/facilities that serve the teen population
  - ▶ Offer incentives for teen to teen referrals
  - ▶ Go to THEM - don't wait for them to come to you
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# Our Partners:

- ▶ CPS Students in Temporary Living Situations Program
  - ▶ Other suburban school districts
  - ▶ McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaisons in schools
  - ▶ Pregnant and Parenting Teen Programs/Shelters
  - ▶ Teen Shelters
  - ▶ Planned Parenthood
  - ▶ Youth Agencies
  - ▶ DCFS
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# What we do:

- ▶ We meet with teens in shelters, the library, schools, in homes and sometimes in the car!
  - ▶ We explain the procedure and timeline for applications
  - ▶ If teens are living at home with parents, parents income information and signature is needed, otherwise we complete application using only the teenagers information
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## What we do cont'd:

- ▶ We bring our computers, scanners, and in our next grant term - mobile printer/fax machines
- ▶ We assist with completing application, scan documents into our computer, complete an electronic submission of the application and fax supporting documents to the central office in Springfield

## What we Do cont'd:

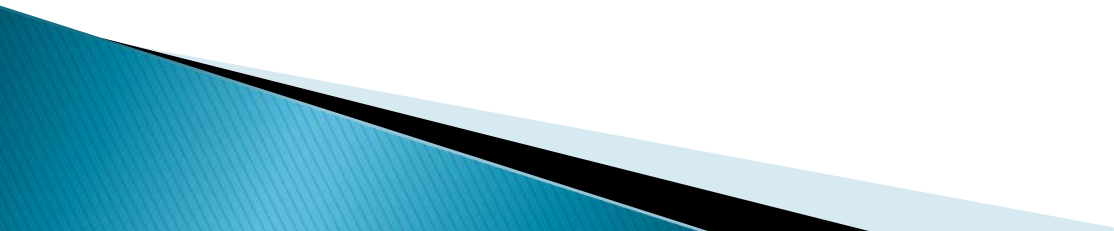
- ▶ We are able to track application, and assist with any problems that may arise through the application process (applicant signs release)
- ▶ Once applicant is approved we deliver an approval packet with health and hygiene items and a small gift card plus important phone numbers
- ▶ In our ongoing efforts we will be including the promotional items with our contact information

# Outreach:

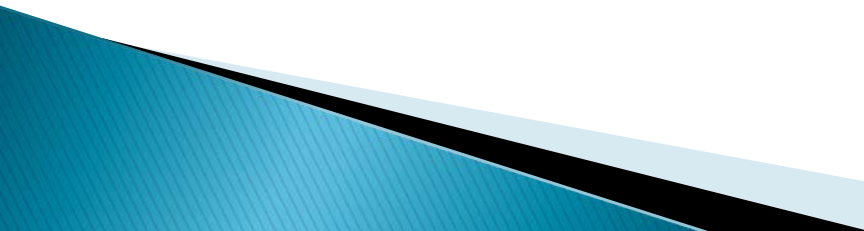
- ▶ We attend many Health Fairs, speak to parent and teen groups, and network with youth providers to spread information about All Kids and Beacon's Outreach enrollment assistance



# Overcoming Barriers:

- ▶ We come to the teen, so there is no need for transportation
  - ▶ Use of Homeless Certification documents allows homeless teens to get state ID free of charge
  - ▶ School ID's can be used for identification; in rare cases we were able to use a photo along with a certifying letter from the shelter
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# Overcoming Barriers cont'd

- ▶ State can use data match from SSA to verify identity so birth certificate is not mandatory
  - ▶ The state gives a certain amount of leeway in applications on behalf of homeless teens
  - ▶ All Kids Liaisons have been of enormous assistance, obtaining information from local offices and assisting us when we hit 'snags' with applications
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Questions?

# Contact Information:

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