



the campaign to prevent unplanned pregnancy

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POWER TO DECIDE, LEHMAN COLLEGE HOST SUMMIT ON SEXUAL WELL-BEING AND EMPOWERMENT

(Washington, D.C.) — Today, in partnership with Lehman College, Power to Decide hosted a summit on sexual health, reproductive justice, contraception and consent with student and faculty from The City University of New York (CUNY). The panel discussion was led by sexual health experts which included Francisco Ramirez, MPH; Elise Schuster, MPH; Raffaele M. Bernardo, DO, FACP, AAHIVS and Stuart Chen-Hayes, PhD. In addition, New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera, District 33, Chairman of the Committee on Health, kicked off the event and provided opening remarks.

Goals from the summit included highlighting disparities on CUNY–campuses that lead to poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes; increasing awareness of strategies that foster inclusivity in order to increase health equity; and raising awareness of resources that promote healthy relationships and include LGBTQ+ students. In addition, the summit focused on identifying and implementing effective approaches for dealing with sexual trauma and bringing awareness to CUNY-based initiatives that support sexual well-being and empowerment.

“It was an honor to partner with Lehman College and we appreciate the commitment from the CUNY community to support all young people so they have the information, access and opportunity to decide if, when and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child,” said JeNeen Anderson, Director, Field Support at Power to Decide. “We need to empower all young people with the tools to live life on their own. Today’s summit is just an example of how we can make resources and information available that promote healthy relationships and sexual health so that we can remove the stigma that often surrounds topics related to sex, love and relationship.”

Of all of New York City’s boroughs, the Bronx has the highest rate of sexually transmitted infections, making the summit that much more of a critical resource for the community. In fact, [the rate of chlamydia infections per 100,000 people in the Bronx is nearly double the rate in other boroughs.](#) According to a youth risk behavior survey of New York City high school students, in 2016 roughly 40% of teens did not use a condom the last time they had sex. In addition, in New York City most cases of chlamydia are reported by women age 15 to 34; and most cases of gonorrhea were reported by men age 15 to 40.

“The Power To Decide and Lehman College Summit on Sexual Well-Being and Empowerment is an incredible opportunity to provide our borough's youth, including those that are part of our LGBT community, access to factual information and resources so that they can make informed decisions about their sexuality, while preventing sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies,” said New York State Senator Gustavo Rivera, Chairman of the Senate Health Committee. “As the Bronx continues

to face high rates of sexually transmitted infections, it is our responsibility as adults to empower and educate our youth so that they become healthy and successful members of our communities.”

“Whether we’re talking about STDs, unplanned pregnancy or sexual violence and the sometimes social stigmatization associated with these events are all things that can derail an academic career,” said Dugeidy Ortiz, Director of Lehman College’s Wellness Education and Promotion who organized the summit. “CUNY Talks: Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights Summit aims to really help us look at our infrastructure and examine how we as a campus address reproductive rights, equity around those rights and how we educate our students. A lot of our students haven’t had exposure to sex-positive health education, and this is an opportunity to teach it in a safe, inclusive and confidential environment.”

Power to Decide is a private, non-partisan, non-profit organization that works to ensure all people—no matter who they are, where they live, or what their economic status might be—have the power to decide if, when, and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. Please visit us at www.PowerToDecide.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Herbert H. Lehman College of The City University of New York is the only CUNY senior college serving the Bronx and the surrounding region as an intellectual, economic, and cultural center. Lehman College provides undergraduate and graduate studies in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education within a dynamic research environment, while embracing diversity and actively engaging students in their academic, personal, and professional development.