

Interview with Mary Wilkie at Public Health. 7/19/07 11:30 a.m. at the Public Health office in Lakeview

Mary's job description is Registered Nurse and Administrator. She has worked with Public health for nine years and lived in Lakeview most of her life. She was in Portland and went to school at OSU in Corvallis.

[Mary commented that she sees] younger sexual activity.

A higher rate of STD's, Chlamydia, 17-24 year olds.

Hard to make general population see that teen pregnancy is not a low income phenomenon that it is happening all over.

Community is not real open to talking about sex which makes it hard for youth to seek assistance or advice [about family planning, being sexually active, getting condoms]

[She doesn't think all of this] as necessarily a rural thing.

Good thing is that it's a small community.

Sports, lots of activities.

Could keep busy [I asked if the kids keep busy, she said they 'could' keep busy]

Youth are somewhat unsatisfied with what there is to do here.

Pregnancy rates are up, [Lake county] was the last county to have Family Planning, FPP, but still below state average.

It could be huge if services not available, but concerning that people still get pregnant. The attitude [of adolescents] is different.

10 yrs ago was stigma [of getting pregnant]

Now people are thinking that getting pregnant is not a big deal, now people don't have a sense of consequence, don't realize the consequences.

Need to educate people on consequence.

There is counseling at schools:

Teach about self-respect, relationship safety, rights as a woman [she said that a lot of people tend to blame others and not take responsibility for themselves]

[I asked if it is easier to be a teen mom in Lakeview or other rural communities]

Cost of living is less.

Help from family is more individual.

More access to WIC, OHP [Oregon Health Plan], food stamps, there is no waiting list, or line. Access to services is readily available.

Schools aren't supportive, no daycare, girls can't go to school while pregnant (or highly discouraged), instead are encouraged to go get their GED. [She didn't think that many ended up getting it]

No condoms in school. If they find one they blame Public Health [I asked if they blamed Public Health or the FPP project. She said a lot of people don't distinguish between the whole department and its several entities]

Can give supplies [like condoms] without parental consent. People are upset about it in the community [She was adamant about people being really opposed to it. She had one woman call her and ask her why she gave her daughter condoms.]

Instead of seeing it as an adult, mature thing by seeking protection and birth control, [People are more upset that their kids are seeking protection for sexual activity, but Mary said that people either don't know, or they are denying, but Mary said the kids are having sex around the age of 13 anyway]

Oregon law says sex under 18 is illegal [I asked if they ask for people's age when they come in for condoms, but they don't ask the age of their partner. If someone comes in and discloses that they met someone age 25 or something and they are under 18 then she can call the public authorities. They do hold files of each person that comes in]

Report about relationship safety, 3 age limit between partners, Public Health and DHS [department of human services] and law enforcement work together.

[She said that] youth [think they] are invincible, immortal, and will hopefully change the world.

[She thinks some of these differences and changes are due to] the internet, technology has blurred the boundaries.