



## **Research Demonstrates the Effectiveness of Communities That Care (CTC) and Evidence- based Programs (EPBs) in PA**

Several large, well-designed research studies in recent years have clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of the *Communities That Care* model in reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors associated with youth problems, and ultimately reducing rates of delinquency and substance use and improving academic performance.

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), the Prevention Research Center at Penn State University has conducted evaluative research on *CTC* in Pennsylvania for over a decade. This research began with a process evaluation of the first 21 *CTC* sites funded by PCCD in the mid-1990's, and focused on the readiness of community coalitions and the development of a longitudinal evaluation plan for *CTC* in Pennsylvania. Findings and recommendations from this initial study led to the statewide adoption of the Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS), the development of a technical assistance infrastructure to support communities with the adoption and sustainability of the *CTC* model, and to the development of a separate initiative to fund the widespread dissemination of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs.

A second study by the Prevention Research Center examined risk and protective factors, delinquency, and drug use among 98,000 Pennsylvania youth in 147 communities. The results showed that youth in *CTC* communities had significantly lower levels of risk, higher levels of protective factors, and significantly lower rates of delinquency and drug use than youth in comparison communities. When the researchers further examined *CTC* communities that were utilizing evidence-based (i.e. prove-effective) programs, the impact nearly doubled.

A longitudinal study followed, examining changes in youth over a 5-year period. The study followed 419 classroom groups of students from 2001 to 2005, and included more than 231,000 youth reports. The study found again that youth in *CTC* communities using evidence-based programs showed significantly better adolescent development than youth in comparison communities. The *CTC* youth had stronger bonds to their schools, families, and communities, and were less influenced by antisocial peers. Most importantly, the youth in *CTC* communities reported nearly 11% less delinquency over the 5-year period, and more than 33% better academic achievement.

Nationally, researchers from the University of Washington also recently concluded a 7-state randomized controlled trial (the most rigorous type of scientific evaluation) comparing two groups of communities, half of which used the *CTC* model. Again, the researchers found that youth in the *CTC* communities had significantly lower levels of risk and significantly lower rates of delinquency than youth in the comparison communities. Combined, this body of published research clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of *CTC* and reinforces the wisdom of PCCD's investment in this community-based prevention planning model.

*For more information on the Communities That Care Initiative in Pennsylvania, please visit the PCCD website at [www.pccd.state.pa.us](http://www.pccd.state.pa.us), or contact the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center at [www.episcenter.psu.edu](http://www.episcenter.psu.edu), or 814-863-2568.*