

Youth consider mobile health units a safe place for sexual health services

February 7 2018

Mobile health units may offer a viable approach for helping adolescents access sexual and health services, including contraception.

Mobile [health](#) units (MHUs), "hospitals on wheels" that visit children's schools, provide a portable and convenient method for bringing healthcare to communities. There are more than 2,000 MHUs in service across the country.

In a pilot study, researchers at the University of Chicago's Center for Interdisciplinary Inquiry and Innovation (Ci3) in Sexual and Reproductive Health conducted interviews and surveys with medical staff and adolescent patients on UChicago Medicine's Comer Children's mobile health unit. Results from the study were published in the March 2018 issue the *Journal of School Health*.

The majority of the patients surveyed—predominantly Black and Latino adolescents, ages 14 to 21, from several urban neighborhoods in Chicago—expressed interest in learning about sexual health through the MHU. More than half of them said they were likely to obtain birth control on an MHU.

Ninety-two percent of the youth reported they would recommend the MHU to friends, while 88 percent found it to be private, and 93 percent found it as a safe place to obtain sexual and reproductive health care.

In addition, the MHU [medical staff](#) expressed interest in being trained to

provide contraceptive and sexual [health services](#).

Findings from the study are now part of a large-scale project in Ci3's Design Thinking Lab. Working together, adolescents and clinicians will help create a future service plan for reproductive health care on mobile health units.

More information: Lilja S. Stefansson et al, MOBILE-izing Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Care: A Pilot Study Using a Mobile Health Unit in Chicago, *Journal of School Health* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/josh.12598](#)

Provided by University of Chicago Medical Center

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