



Black Caucus x LAC Youth Commission Listening Session Summary Report

Partnership: First Star Bruin Guardian Scholars & Los Angeles County Youth Commission

Session Date: Saturday, February 7, 2026

Participants: 25 Youth and Young Adults

Survey Responses: 24–25 per question

Purpose

The Los Angeles County Commission on HIV Black Caucus, in partnership with First Star Bruin Guardian Scholars and the Los Angeles County Youth Commission, convened this youth listening session to better understand young people's sexual health needs and healthcare experiences, particularly as they relate to HIV prevention and culturally responsive care.

This session is part of the Black Caucus' broader community listening series aimed at hearing directly from Black communities about their sexual health needs. The goal is to translate lived experience into actionable insights that can be shared with community partners and providers to strengthen a culturally responsive system of care for communities disproportionately impacted by HIV.

Given the age range and lived experiences of participants, facilitators approached sexual health thoughtfully and framed the discussion through a whole-person healthcare lens. This allowed youth to speak openly about trust, communication, autonomy, and system navigation, all of which directly influence sexual health engagement.

While the conversation extended beyond sexual health specifically, this was instructive. Youth experiences affirm that sexual health is deeply interconnected with mental health, family dynamics, trauma, and system trust. Strengthening sexual health outcomes therefore requires strengthening the overall healthcare experience.

Follow-up sessions may be needed to more intentionally focus on the specific sexual health needs of youth and young adults to further inform prevention and care strategies aligned with the Commission's Integrated HIV Plan.

Quantitative Highlights

Comfort & Confidence in Healthcare

- 96% feel okay visiting a doctor, nurse, or clinic
- 80% feel treated respectfully
- 72% believe healthcare visits can be safe and positive
- 60% feel safe discussing personal topics
- 48% feel confident asking questions
- 36% responded “maybe” when asked about confidence in asking questions
- 62% expressed some level of nervousness about appointments

Insight: Youth generally feel comfortable accessing care; however, confidence in self-advocacy and emotional ease during appointments varies. Empowerment and intentional provider communication remain critical.

Access & System Navigation

- 84% have transportation to appointments
- 84% know where to go for healthcare or support
- 83% know who to seek for health advice
- 46% know how to change their doctor if needed

Insight: Access barriers are relatively low among this group, but understanding how to exercise choice within healthcare systems remains limited. Autonomy requires not only entry into care but clarity around navigation.

Support Systems & Relational Health

- 92% feel their concerns are taken seriously by trusted adults
- 88% have at least one healthy adult they can talk to about their health
- 67% believe schools or community groups support youth health
- 54% report that family, friends, or culture influence how they think about health

Insight: Strong relational ecosystems exist for many youth. Trusted adults play a protective and reinforcing role in health behaviors and decision-making.

Health Beliefs & Behaviors

- 100% believe healthy habits create a better lifestyle
- 100% believe mental health is just as important as physical health
- 60% report taking daily steps to stay healthy
- 29% report eating junk food when stressed, with 42% responding “maybe”
- 48% can go a full day without scrolling social media
- 52% wish there were more creative activities related to health education

Insight: Youth strongly value holistic health and mental health equity. However, stress management and digital balance present opportunities for skill-building. There is clear interest in innovative and engaging health education approaches.

Qualitative Themes from Listening Session Dialogue

1. COVID-19’s Lasting Impact

Many participants experienced the loss of family members during the pandemic. These experiences shaped their trust in healthcare systems. For some, it created skepticism; for others, it inspired greater awareness and proactive health engagement.

2. Family Health Influences

Several youth have parents or caregivers with chronic medical conditions, increasing early exposure to healthcare systems and shaping their understanding of prevention and advocacy.

3. Clear Communication Builds Trust

Youth emphasized the importance of providers explaining diagnoses and procedures in accessible language. Being “walked through” processes fosters understanding and comfort.

4. Holistic Check-Ins Matter

Participants appreciate when providers inquire about both physical and mental health. Whole-person care increases relational trust.

5. Flexibility Supports Equity

Youth face scheduling challenges due to school, work, caregiving responsibilities, and transportation barriers. Grace and flexibility in appointment management were described as meaningful.

6. Choice Creates Safety

Autonomy increases trust. Youth feel safer when given options regarding treatment plans and next steps.

7. Power Dynamics in Clinical Settings

Comfort levels varied when it came to asserting needs or saying “no” to providers. This highlights ongoing power dynamics and reinforces the importance of shared decision-making practices.

Overall Insights

- Youth value holistic, trauma-informed, and autonomy-affirming care.
- Trust in healthcare is present but shaped by lived experience, particularly during crisis events such as COVID-19.
- Access barriers are relatively low within this group, but empowerment and navigation require strengthening.
- Relational support systems are a key protective factor.
- Youth are open to creative, culturally responsive, and interactive health education models.
- Sexual health engagement must be understood within the broader context of whole-person care.

Recommendations

1. Expand provider training on youth-centered communication and shared decision-making.
 2. Normalize consent language and actively encourage youth questions during appointments.
 3. Develop creative and interactive health-related programming.
 4. Provide clearer guidance for youth on how to change providers and navigate healthcare systems independently.
 5. Continue youth listening sessions to ensure ongoing feedback into policy and practice.
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Moving Forward

This listening session reaffirmed that young people are thoughtful, self-aware, and deeply influenced by relational and systemic factors in their healthcare experiences. Their insights underscore the importance of youth-centered, trauma-informed, and autonomy-affirming practices within healthcare and prevention systems.

As the Black Caucus continues to advance strategies aligned with the Commission's Integrated HIV Plan, youth voice must remain central. Strengthening sexual health outcomes requires not only access to services, but trust, agency, and environments where young people feel heard and respected.

The work ahead is not only about care ... it is about agency, equity, and building systems worthy of youth trust.

