

SIECUS

SUMMER/FALL 2012

DEVELOPMENTS

SIECUS Developments is the semiannual newsletter of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, a national nonprofit organization. Since 1964, SIECUS has been at the forefront of promoting comprehensive sexuality education for people of all ages and protecting the rights of individuals to make informed sexual and reproductive choices.

UPCOMING DATES TO REMEMBER

OCTOBER IS
LET'S TALK MONTH

OCTOBER 11TH IS
NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY

DECEMBER 1ST IS
WORLD AIDS DAY



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Monica Rodriguez

As we wrap up SIECUS' 48th year, I am just bursting with pride about where we've been and where we are going. Earlier this year we launched our strategic plan, *Creating a Sexually Healthy America, SIECUS: A Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012-2016*. The Board, staff, and I could not be more excited. Over the past year, we've made some amazing strides for sexuality education and sexual health programs. I am pleased to share just a few highlights from this year with you.

State Advocacy: SIECUS worked with partners in Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, New York, and several southern states to: develop strategies to flip school district policies to comprehensive sex education; prepare to apply for federal funds through the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP); and provide technical assistance on strategy development for sexuality education and teen pregnancy prevention coalitions and organizations.

Educational Trainings and Presentations: SIECUS conducted several trainings and presentations this year, reaching hundreds of educators, advocates, youth development professionals, clinicians, and school administrators from Maryland, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Mississippi

who reach thousands of young people each year.

National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12: In January 2012, the first-ever national standards for sexuality education in public schools were published in the *Journal of School Health*. The ground-breaking *National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K-12* provide clear, consistent, and straightforward guidance on the essential minimum, core content for sexuality education that is developmentally and age-appropriate for students in grades Kindergarten through 12. The *Standards* are the result of a cooperative effort by four leading health organizations in coordination with the Future of Sex Education (FoSE) Initiative (led by Advocates for Youth, Answer, and SIECUS). Since its release, the *Standards* have received over 400 news media hits. In addition, FoSE partners have hosted 12 informational webinars to date on the *Standards* for state coalition partners, educators, and advocates throughout the country.

Real Education for Healthy Youth Act: SIECUS, along with other members of the Sex Education Coalition, worked closely with the offices of Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Congresswoman Barbara

Continued on page 2

5 WAYS

Five Ways You Can Support the Mission of SIECUS

1 Become a monthly donor to SIECUS. If you are not able to make the gift you'd like in one sum, break it up over the course of the year by making monthly payments using your credit card. Just visit our secure website at www.siecus.org and click on the DONATE button where donations can be made in any increment and on any schedule.

2 When your friends and family ask, "What do you want for your birthday?," tell them you'd like a donation made to SIECUS in your name. We will acknowledge this gift to the donor as well as to the person the gift honors.

3 This holiday season, instead of buying gifts for people who probably don't need more "things," send a donation to SIECUS and support the health and futures of our young people.

4 Hold a dinner party, cocktail party, or any other kind of party to introduce your friends, colleagues, and family to SIECUS. We can always provide you with materials to initiate a conversation about SIECUS, our mission, and the issues we address. For more information about hosting your party, please call Jason Osher, Chief Operating Officer, at (212) 819-9770, extension 319.

5 Ensure SIECUS' stability and future by making a planned gift, such as a bequest, listing SIECUS in your will, or naming SIECUS as the beneficiary and owner of a life insurance policy. For more information, please call Jason Osher, Chief Operating Officer, at (212) 819-9770, extension 319.

Message from the President

Continued from page 1

Lee (D-CA) to conceptualize and draft the *Real Education for Healthy Youth Act* (S. 1782, H.R. 3324). Introduced November 2, 2011, the legislation includes a Sense of Congress outlining what sex education programs must look like in order to receive federal funding and restricting federal funding to programs that do not meet a bare minimum standard; grants for comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents; grants for comprehensive sexuality education in institutions of higher education; and grants for pre-service and in-service teacher training for K-12 sex educators.


One Voice: Reproductive Health and Environment Summit: The sixth annual *One Voice: Reproductive Health and Environment Summit* took place October 28-31, 2011, in Washington, DC. SIECUS cosponsored this year's Summit with Advocates for Youth, Americans for Informed Democracy, and the Sierra Club. Forty-five youth between the ages of 17 and 25 participated in issue-based and skills-building workshops. The Summit wrapped up with an advocacy day on Capitol Hill where participants met with 46 House and Senate offices.

State Summit VI: The State Summit VI was held from May 7 - 10, 2012 in Washington, DC. A total of 85 advocates and educators from 27 states and the District of Columbia attended. In addition, we had over 40 staff from national organizations and presenters, totaling 130 participants. SIECUS coordinated and hosted the Summit with several national colleagues, including Advocates for Youth, the American Civil Liberties Union, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America, among others. In addition, SIECUS' key partners from several states participated,

including advocates from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, and West Virginia. This was our largest and most successful State Summit to date.

National Coalition to Support Sexuality Education (NCSSE): SIECUS held this year's NCSSE meeting in Washington, DC on April 17, 2012. Starting off with a welcome from SIECUS, the agenda included a federal policy update, a panel on sex education in the states, an update from the Division of Adolescent and School Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and a presentation on the Future of Sex Education's (FoSE) *National Sexuality Education Standards*. It was a day packed with information and strategies to help lead our field.

SIECUS State Profiles: SIECUS released its eighth annual publication (2010 edition) of the *State Profiles* in October 2011. The edition was the first-ever to include information on federally supported programming and best practices for more comprehensive approaches to sex education. It also includes details on the evidence-based intervention models approved for use through the President's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI). One of the most comprehensive publications of the *Profiles* yet, it has helped advance the efforts of educators and advocates across the country.

Your support is what made these accomplishments possible. SIECUS now needs your help to continue toward the ambitious goals outlined in our strategic plan. Your support makes a positive difference in the sexual health and lives of people across the nation. I hope we can count on you! 

Creating a Sexually Healthy America

SIECUS: A Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012–2016

Today, we have the opportunity to build the first generation of sexually health adults. SIECUS is seizing this opportunity by defining, framing, and supporting a new public discourse to shift the paradigm on sexual health and well-being and to create a sexually healthy America. Below is a description of our three strategic priorities for the period of 2012 through 2016.

Strategic Priority 1: Sexual Health and Well-Being

SIECUS promotes a broad, holistic framework for sexual health and well-being throughout the lifespan. There is an urgent need for a new approach in the public and professional discourse about sexuality. The current dialogue in the United States tends to be negative, disease and problem focused, and exploitative. Sexuality is a fundamental part of being human and a shift in the discourse to reflect a broader, holistic framework is required to move us toward achieving sexual health and well-being throughout the lifespan.



Strategic Priority 3: Sexual Health Care Services

SIECUS believes that all people in the United States should have equal access to quality sexual health care services. Sexual health and well-being can only be achieved by eliminating health disparities and providing accessible, affordable, and confidential sexual health care services for all. SIECUS will use its policy and program implementation expertise to move our country towards more equitable access to sexual health care services.

Each of these strategic priorities is interconnected; only by providing access to high-quality sexuality education and sexual health care services will we reach the goal of a public that enjoys sexual health and well-being throughout the lifespan. SIECUS is addressing each of these strategic priorities by leveraging our position at the nexus of policy and implementation. In addition, these priorities are informing our fundraising and institutional strengthening activities.

Strategic Priority 2: Sexuality Education

SIECUS works to ensure the availability of high-quality sexuality education whose goal is to support sexual health and well-being throughout the lifespan. We focus our efforts in four interconnected areas: policy and advocacy, program implementation, resource development, and training.

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Information is everything.
And that's a fact of life.



Make an online donation to SIECUS by going to www.siecus.org
Look for the **Support SIECUS!**
Make Sexuality Education Available to All box with the **DONATE NOW!** Button.



REMEMBER TO VISIT THE SIECUS WEBSITE:
www.SIECUS.org

CDC Releases 2011 YRBS Data: Fewer Youth Receiving Information about HIV and AIDS

In June 2012, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the 2011 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The YRBS, which is

NOTES FROM THE RESEARCH

The May 4, 2012 issue of the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR) reported the following:

- The 2010 U.S. teen birth rate (among 13-19 year olds) of 34.3 births per 1,000 females reflected a 44% decline from 1990. Despite this trend, U.S. teen birth rates remain higher than rates in other developed countries.
- During 2006–2010, 57% of females aged 15–19 years had never had sex (defined as vaginal intercourse), an increase from 49% in 1995.
- Approximately 60% of sexually experienced teens reported current use of highly effective contraceptive methods, an increase from 47% in 1995.

Nationally representative data on females aged 15–19 years were obtained from three survey cycles of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG): 1995, 2002, and 2006–2010.

Addressing the complex issue of teen childbearing requires a comprehensive approach to sexual health that includes continued promotion of delayed sexual debut and increased use of highly effective contraception among sexually experienced teens.

released biennially, tracks a variety of health risk behaviors, including sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancies and STDs, including HIV, among a representative sample of high school students. The 2011 YRBS surveyed more than 15,000 high school students from across the country and includes national YRBS data as well as data from 43 states and 21 large urban school districts.

Between 1991, when the YRBS was first conducted, and 1999 there were sharp increases in positive sexual health behaviors and decreases in negative behaviors. Since then, however, that progress has predominantly stalled or moved backward.


The 2011 YRBS tells us that even fewer young people are being reached with sex education that includes the vital information youth need to delay sexual activity and prevent HIV, other STDs, and unintended pregnancies when they do become sexually active.

For ten years, roughly 10-15% of young people reported not being taught about HIV and AIDS in school. The 2011 YRBS shows a worsening of this trend: for the first time, more than 15% of students reported not being taught about AIDS or HIV in school.

While not statistically significant at the moment, there are some signs in this year's results than past years that reveal young people may be

putting themselves at greater risk. Key results for sexual behavior in the 2011 YRBS included the following:

- 47.4% of students reported ever having had sexual intercourse (46% in 2009)
- 15.3% of students reported having had sex with four or more sexual partners (13.8% in 2009)
- 33.7% of students reported being currently sexually active, defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey (34.2% in 2009)
- 60.2% of sexually active students reported that either they or their partner had used a condom during last sex (61.1% in 2009)
- 18.0% of sexually active students reported that either they or their partner had used birth control pills to prevent pregnancy before last sexual intercourse (19.8% in 2009)
- 12.9% of sexually active students had not used any method to prevent pregnancy during last sexual intercourse (11.9% in 2009)
- 84.0% of students reported having been taught about AIDS or HIV in school (87% in 2009)

Some of the changes noted above between 2009 and 2011 indicate that we must closely watch YRBS results in future years to determine any further erosion of the positive trends that were seen in the 1990s. 

Are you a federal employee?

If so, you can make your donation to SIECUS using the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

SIECUS is an approved charity of the Campaign's Health and Medical Research Charities of America. **Our CFC code number is: 11848**

Little Progress Made in Sex Education Among U.S. Schools From 2008–2010


The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released an analysis in April 2012, *School Health Profiles data, HIV, Other STD, and Pregnancy Prevention Education in Public Secondary Schools — 45 States, 2008–2010*. Findings indicate that, between 2008 and 2010, little progress was made in increasing the percentage of selected sexual health topics taught in public middle and high schools.

The *School Health Profiles* document school health policies and practices through questionnaires collected from the principal and/or the lead health education instructors from a given school every two years. The latest data comes from the 45 states that participated in the survey. The CDC recommends 11 key prevention topics for grades 6–8, as well as eight key prevention topics and three condom-related topics for grades 9–12. Key topics in middle school included, for example, how STDs and HIV are transmitted; how to prevent HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy; the benefits of being sexually abstinent; and communication, negotiation, and decision-making skills. In high school, key topics included all of the middle school topics plus the relationship between alcohol and other drug use and risk for HIV, other STDs, and pregnancy, and

three condom-related topics.

From 2008–2010, in 11 states the percentage of middle schools addressing all recommended key topics declined and there was no increase in any state. Among recommended topics for grades 9–12, there was a significant decrease in one state and a significant increase in two states. Regarding the condom related topics, the percentage of all three topics taught significantly decreased in eight states and significantly increased in only three states. The percentage of schools that address all of these topics varies widely between states from 12.6 percent in Arizona to 66.3 percent in New York. Similarly, schools that teach eight of the suggested high school topics ranged from 45.3 percent in Alaska to 96.4 percent in New Jersey.

The analysis does not provide an explanation for why there are significant decreases in many states and widespread stagnation in several others. One potential cause for the decrease and stagnation of recommended prevention topics in the nation's public schools is the increased push to allocate funding and efforts into student test scores, resulting in a reluctance to expand health education. Another cause may be that sexuality education is considered a controversial area of

education, and although suggested topics for both middle school and high school include sexual abstinence, sexuality education remains highly politicized. 

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

In the majority of Mississippi's 151 school districts, students will be taught an abstinence-only sex education curriculum, according to the state Department of Education. Under state law, this year school district leaders had to decide whether to adopt an abstinence-only or an abstinence-plus curriculum, which is one that also addresses STD, HIV, and pregnancy prevention methods. Eighty-four school districts are adopting abstinence-only while 74 school districts are adopting abstinence-plus. Only a handful of districts have adopted both curricula.

Yet, the need for sex education in Mississippi is dire, as underscored by the following recent data.

- Mississippi's teen birth rate currently ranks 1st in the United States.
- Mississippi ranks 2nd in reported cases of Chlamydia among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S.
- Mississippi ranks 2nd in reported cases of gonorrhea among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S.
- Mississippi ranks 3rd in reported cases of syphilis among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S.
- Mississippi's HIV infection rate ranks 6th in the U.S.

Become a Monthly SIECUS Supporter!

Can't make the large donation you'd like to all at once?
Spread it out over the year instead.

Sign up for an automatic donation to be made to SIECUS each month securely charged to the credit card of your choice. You can sign up for this free service by visiting the SIECUS website at www.siecus.org and clicking on the **DONATE** button.

FEELING BOARD

Feeling Board is SIECUS' way to introduce you to the members of our board of directors. Members come from throughout the United States. The diverse perspectives, experiences, and talents each board member brings helps to make SIECUS the vibrant organization it is today.

In this issue, we feature SIECUS Board member **Dr. Nadia Dowshen**.

Please meet Dr. Nadia Dowshen



How did you first learn about SIECUS? I'm not sure exactly when it was that I first learned about SIECUS, but it may have been as early as my high school years when I was a student leader of a peer educator HIV prevention program or in college when I started a teen pregnancy prevention program for young women. Through the many years of my work to improve the sexual health of adolescents I have always been familiar with the SIECUS name as a trusted resource and advocate for comprehensive sexuality education.


What brought you to the SIECUS board of directors? A colleague contacted me about the possibility of joining the SIECUS board since I knew that the organization had done really important work in advocating

for comprehensive sex education. I was very excited to learn more about what SIECUS was doing today and the recent strategic planning process which strengthened the organization and defined its priorities as: sexual health and well-being; sexuality education; and sexual health care services. Once I met the other board members and the staff leadership of SIECUS, I was hooked because they are really wonderful people who do amazing work.

Why do you think that SIECUS is important? Unfortunately, we still live in a world where many people lack access to quality sex education and sexual health services. SIECUS is one of few organizations specifically dedicated to monitoring and changing policies, as well as improving the provision of education and services related sexual health. This advocacy and implementation work will always be incredibly important, and now more than ever, given the current economic and political climate.

How does SIECUS' work help you in your life? It is so wonderful to be part of an organization that has such important impact on my professional and personal life. As a pediatrician and adolescent medicine clinician and researcher working primarily with youth living with HIV/AIDS, I know that I can count on SIECUS to advocate for better sex education

and sexual health services for the young people I care for. Also it is essential that researchers like me are able to partner with organizations like SIECUS to ensure that sound scientific evidence informs policy decisions. Now that I am a parent, SIECUS is even more important to me. I know that I can count on SIECUS for the best information about sexuality education and I believe that the organization's work will make it more likely that my child will grow up in a world where all individuals are supported for who they are no matter their gender or sexual identity.

What advice would you give to other supporters of SIECUS for ways to help the organization and its mission? As an adolescent health clinician, researcher, and advocate I have learned over the years that funding is very limited for the kind of work that SIECUS does. Any resources that you can provide either financially or donating your time, space, talent, etc, can be incredibly helpful. Ultimately, you can help SIECUS and our mission most by standing up for access to quality, comprehensive sex education and healthcare through activities like advocating at school board meetings, signing petitions, and educating others in your community. If you want to know more about how you can help, call SIECUS, visit our website, or sign up for email updates or RSS feed. 

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October 2012

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MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

Does your company
match your charitable
contributions? If so, send
your company's matching
gift form with your
donation to SIECUS.

SIECUS SALUTES!

Gifts made in honor of an individual
can commemorate a birthday or
anniversary, recognize the work of
someone special, memorialize a special
person, or celebrate the holidays.

**Below are recent gifts to SIECUS
for the period of February 2012 –
August 2012 from special people
to special people.**

- Dr. Michael A. Carrera in
memory of David Mace
- Eli Coleman in honor of
M. Joycelyn Elders
- Dr. Darrel Lang in honor of
Jason Osher and Rick Schubel
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- Dr. Elizabeth Schroeder in
honor of Elias Fkira
- Evelyn and Stephen Shalom
in honor of Dr. Eva Goldfarb
- Richard Warren Smith, Ph.D. in
memory of Catherine H. Smith

**Please consider honoring someone
special in your life with a gift to
SIECUS.**

SIECUS' Online Resource for Teens and Young Adults

REMEMBER TO VISIT www.seriouslysexuality.com





SIECUS

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Council of the United States

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Jason I. Osher, Chief Operating Officer

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SIECUS Developments is a semiannual publication of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States. Founded in 1964, SIECUS affirms that sexuality is a fundamental part of being human, one that is worthy of dignity and respect. We advocate for the right of all people to accurate information, comprehensive education about sexuality, and sexual health services. SIECUS works to create a world that ensures social justice and sexual rights.

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Plan It!

Planned gifts are a sensible way to have a lasting social impact through the organizations you care about most. There are many benefits to making a planned gift to SIECUS, including making a larger charitable gift than you thought possible; providing inheritances for your heirs at a reduced tax cost; reducing your income tax and/or avoiding capital gains tax; diversifying your investment portfolio; and leaving a charitable legacy for future generations.

There are several planned giving opportunities that would help secure the critical work of SIECUS for years to come.

Bequests • Life Insurance

Retirement Plan Assets • Trusts

Your lawyer or financial advisor can help you take the next step toward making a planned gift to SIECUS and investing in a sexually healthy future for all.

If you need any additional information or assistance, please don't hesitate to call Jason Osher, chief operating officer at SIECUS, at 212.819.9770, extension 319.