



CONNECTICUT

Connecticut received \$982,484 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2004.¹

Connecticut Sexuality Education Law

Connecticut does not require schools to teach sexuality education, but does require that schools teach human growth and development and disease prevention.

The Connecticut State Board of Education is charged with developing sexuality education curriculum guides which “shall include, but not be limited to, information on developing a curriculum including family planning, human sexuality, parenting, nutrition and the emotional, physical, psychological, hygienic, economic and social aspects of family life, provided the curriculum guides shall not include information pertaining to abortion as an alternative to family planning.”

Students may be excused from sexuality education classes with written notification from a parent or legal guardian. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Connecticut Statutes Chapter 164 Sections 10-16b-f, and 10-19.

Recent Legislation

Parental Notification of Family Life Program Legislation Introduced

House Bill 5514, introduced in January 2005 and referred to the joint Committee on Education, would require school districts to notify any parent of a student who is eligible to participate in a family life program.

Bill Would Require Review of Sex Education Programs

Senate Bill 363, introduced in January 2005 and referred to the joint Committee on Education, would require school districts to review their sex education programs in order to guarantee that the program is comprehensive and includes, “abstinence, human development, relationships, sexual health, and sexually transmitted diseases.”

Events of Note

Sex Education Curriculum Changed After Parents Complain November 2004; Bristol, CT

The Bristol Board of Education recently made several revisions to the health education curriculum after inviting comments from parents.

The school district decided to allow area parents to review the middle school health curriculum after receiving complaints from a group of concerned parents. In the Spring of 2004,

a group of parents attended several school board meetings to argue against portions of the middle school's curriculum that discussed abortion. They requested that parents be included in the curriculum revision process which was taking place for the first time in eight years. Some of the parents consulted with an attorney and argued that lessons about abortion taught in the "life skills" courses were in violation of state law.

At the time, the school replied by explaining that the course in question was not a requirement and that parents could choose to remove their child from the course. The school then notified parents again of the lessons being taught and reminded them of their right to remove their child.

In October, however, the school district decided to allow parents to review the curriculum at each of the three middle schools. The district then revised the curriculum accordingly. According to the Director of the Office of Teaching and Learning, "thirty-one written comments were received....Revisions were made."²

One change involved videos that provided information on contraception. Parents complained that this sent a mixed message. One parent exclaimed, "how are we going to teach abstinence when we show videos showing other options? The students who viewed these videos said they were all about birth control and not about peer pressure."³ In response, the board of education voted to end the use of the videos.

Parents will be notified about all of the changes to the curriculum and materials by mail.

*Connecticut Town Considers Revising Sexuality Education Curricula
June 2003; Waterbury, CT*

A school board member in Waterbury, Connecticut proposed replacing instruction on birth control with discussions about the physical, social, and emotional damage that can result from teen sexual activity. "I feel like I've got dirt on my hands if I tell (teenagers) to use a condom and you'll be safe. That's a lie. That's a flat-out lie. We need to be telling them the truth of what the consequences are if they make the choice to be sexually active," the member said.⁴

In response to the proposal, the city's board of health asked to be involved in making changes to the curriculum. Board of health members voiced support for a curriculum that includes discussion of both abstinence and contraception. "As a person, I want my kid to hear the abstinence message as much as possible," one board member said, "but as a health board, we have to be responsible... to those teenagers who are already sexually active."⁵

The revised curriculum would replace one that consists of eight hours of classroom instruction each year, including 45 minutes focused on contraception.

*Teenager Gets School District to Reevaluate Sexuality Education Program
February 2003; Central Village, CT*

A Plainfield High School junior was so inspired by her English class project which focused on the need for improved sexuality education that she decided to take her report to the school board. She described her school's existing program by saying that "there's nothing about abstinence—nothing about prevention. It's just very basic. I think we should have, at least, some part of it on abstinence and prevention. We have thousands of girls getting pregnant each year [in the region]."⁶

The student spoke to the school board about the need for more class time dedicated to ways to prevent teen pregnancy, including information about contraception and abstinence. As a result of her presentation, the school board voted unanimously to have the curriculum reviewed by two subcommittees. They also invited the student to provide input.

Connecticut’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2000, Connecticut’s abortion rate was 30 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁷
- In 2002, Connecticut’s birth rate was 26 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.⁸
- In 2003, teens ages 15-19 accounted for 34% of 41,882 cases of Chlamydia reported in Connecticut.⁹
- In 2003, teens ages 15-19 accounted for 24% of 15,093 cases of gonorrhea reported in Connecticut.¹⁰

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Connecticut received \$330,484 in federal Title V funds in Fiscal Year 2004. The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. In Connecticut, the sole sub-grantee, Greater Bridgeport Adolescent Pregnancy Program, Inc., provides the match.

Connecticut’s Department of Public Health is responsible for Title V funding and allocates approximately \$125,000 for a media campaign. Another \$50,000 is allocated to Greater Bridgeport Adolescent Pregnancy Program, Inc., and the remainder will be spent on various support systems or be carried over into 2005.

According to the Department of Public Health’s website, “the purpose of this initiative is to provide a non-fear-based Abstinence-Only education to youths, targeting those aged 9-14.” Connecticut has chosen to focus on sections A, C, G, and H of the federal government’s A-H definition of abstinence education. This means that any funded program must:

- Ha[ve] as its exclusive purpose teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity;
- Teach that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other associated health problems;
- Teach young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increase vulnerability to sexual advances; and
- Teach the importance of attaining self-sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity.

The media campaign, entitled *Not Me, Not Now*, includes an interactive website, which features games (with no clear abstinence message or focus), newsletters, and a question and answer section. The section answers the question, “What are the emotional consequences of sex?” by saying, “You want to wait? Right on, save yourself the heartbreak, degradation, and embarrassment that comes after sex without commitment.”¹¹

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance—Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS–CBAE)¹² and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There is one SPRANS–CBAE grantee in Connecticut: Network Connecticut (Catholic Charities and Family Services). There are no AFLA grantees in Connecticut.

Network Connecticut (Catholic Charities and Family Services) coordinates a SPRANS–CBAE grant that is used in the dioceses of Bridgeport, Hartford, and Norwich. This program targets youth ages 12-18 and uses *The Choice Game*, *Sex Can Wait*, and *Abstinence: Pick and Choose Activities*.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2004

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Connecticut Department of Public Health www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/Family%20Health/aoe2.htm	\$330,484 federal	Title V
Greater Bridgeport Adolescent Pregnancy Program, Inc.	\$50,000	Title V sub-grantee
Network Connecticut (Catholic Charities and Family Services) 2003-2006	\$652,000	SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

Linda Burns
Maternal and Child Health Unit
Connecticut Department of Health
410 Capitol Ave., MS #11 MAT
PO Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 509-8066

Connecticut Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Connecticut Civil Liberties Union
32 Grand St.
Hartford, CT 06106
Phone: (860) 247-9823
www.cclu.org

GLSEN Connecticut
PO Box 2405
Stamford, CT 06906
Phone: (203) 288-2399

NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut
135 Broad St.
Hartford, CT 06105
Phone: (860) 524-1086
www.ctnaral.org

Planned Parenthood of Connecticut
345 Whitney Ave.
New Haven, CT 06510
Phone: (203) 865-5158
www.ppct.org

Connecticut Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Connecticut Right to Life Corporation
PO Box 2343
Waterbury, CT 06722
Phone: (203) 757-5213
www.cctrl.com

Family Institute of Connecticut
PO Box 260210
Hartford, CT 06126
Phone: (860) 548-0066
www.ctfamily.org

Newspapers in Connecticut

The Advocate
Suzanne Sorrentino
Community News Editor
75 Tresser Blvd.
Stamford, CT 06901
Phone: (203) 299-5522

Connecticut Post
Sev Rinaldi
Health & Medicine Editor
410 State St.
Bridgeport, CT 06604
Phone: (203) 330-6309

The Day
Carol McCarthy
Community News Editor
47 Eugene O'Neill Dr.
New London, CT 06320
Phone: (860) 442-2200

The Hartford Courant
Michael Remez
Congress Reporter
1325 G St. NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 824-8456

The Hartford Courant
Nancy Schoeffler
Health & Medicine Editor
285 Broad St.
Hartford, CT 06115
Phone: (860) 241-6462

Journal Inquirer
Don Michak
Medical/Health Reporter
306 Progress Dr.
Manchester, CT 06040
Phone: (860) 646-0500

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New Haven Register
Abram Katz
Health & Medicine Editor
40 Sargent Dr.
New Haven, CT 06511
Phone: (203) 789-5719

The News-Times
Nancy Hutson
Community News Reporter
333 Main St.
Danbury, CT 06810
Phone: (203) 731-3339

Norwich Bulletin
Fran Kefalas
Medical/Health Editor
66 Franklin St.
Norwich, CT 06360
Phone: (860) 887-9211

Record-Journal
Martin Waters
Community News Reporter
11 Crown St.
Meriden, CT 06450
Phone: (203) 235-2232

Waterbury Republican-American
Robyn Adams
Community News Staff Writer
389 Meadow St.
Waterbury, CT 06702
Phone: (203) 574-3636

¹ This refers to the fiscal year for the Federal Government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2004 begins on October 1, 2003 and ends on September 30, 2004.

² Katherine Marcotte, "Sex Ed Classes' Videos Removed," *Bristol Press* (CT), 4 November 2004, accessed 7 January 2004, <http://www.ctcentral.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=13291729&BRD=1643&PAG=461&dept_id=10486&rfti=8>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "Push On To Teach Abstinence, Rather Than Birth Control," *Associated Press*, 27 June 2003.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ M. Lemanski, "Teenager Embraces Abstinence," *Norwich (CT) Bulletin*, Tuesday, 25 February 2003

⁷ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <www.guttmacher.org>.

⁸ *National Vital Statistics Reports 52.10* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2003), 48, accessed 4 February 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/births.htm#stat%20tables>>.

⁹ *Chlamydia Cases by Age at Diagnosis, Connecticut 1999-2003*, Connecticut STD Control Program (2004), accessed 7 February 2005, <http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/STD_2003/std_chal_table10.htm>.

¹⁰ *Gonorrhea Cases by Age at Diagnosis, Connecticut 1999-2003*, Connecticut STD Control Program (2004), accessed 7 February 2005, <http://www.dph.state.ct.us/BCH/infectiousdise/STD_2003/std_gc_table10.htm>.

¹¹ *Teen Interactive*, Not Me, Not Now, accessed 21 February 2004, <<http://www.notmenotnow.org>>.

¹² In FY 2004 SPRANS-CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In FY 2005 this funding stream was moved to HHS' Administration for Children and Families and is now referred to simply as Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE).