



New Mexico

New Mexico received at least \$394,984* in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

New Mexico Sexuality Education Law

New Mexico does not mandate that schools teach sexuality education, however, it does mandate that schools “provide instruction about AIDS and related issues in the curriculum of the required Comprehensive Health Education Program.” This instruction must include “ways to reduce the risk of getting AIDS, stressing abstinence” and must be taught to all students in all grades.

Educational materials and the grade levels at which they will be introduced are determined by local school districts. All instruction must be age appropriate. Local school boards must “insure the involvement of parents, staff, and students in the development of policies and the review of instructional materials.”

New Mexico law does not specify if parents or guardians can remove their students from such instruction.

See New Mexico Administrative Code 6.12.3.

Recent Legislation

The New Mexico legislature does not carry bills over from one legislative session to the next. Related 2003 and 2004 bills are listed. New Mexico’s legislative session ended on February 19, 2004.

Medically Accurate, Age-Appropriate Sexuality Education Bill Died, 2003 Session
The Health and Human Development Education Act, House Bill 554, was introduced on February 5, 2003 and passed the House on February 25 by a vote of 61 to 2.

HB 554 would have required the Department of Education to create guidelines for schools on age-appropriate health and human development courses for grades kindergarten through 12. While schools are currently required to provide health education, such instruction may be taught as a separate class or as part of the curriculum for other subjects. This bill outlined different guidelines for grades kindergarten through four, five through eight, and nine through 12.

Under the legislation, the Department of Education would also have been required to provide “medically accurate health and human development information” to districts.

The bill died at the end of the legislative session after the Senate took no action.

* Exact funding information for one SPRANS-CBAE grantee in New Mexico was not available to SIECUS.

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 2003 begins on October 1, 2002 and ends on September 30, 2003.

Events of Note*Parents Not Allowed To Attend Their Child's Sexuality Education Class
April 2003; Zuni, NM*

The parents of a Zuni Elementary School fifth grader were upset when the school principal would not allow them to attend their son's sexuality education class video and discussion. The parents said they had attended the class five years ago when their daughter was enrolled and could not understand why they were now barred. According to the mother, "we just want to be there so we can discuss this with our son at home."²

The principal said she denied the parents' request because her priority is to make sure her students "... feel comfortable, for them to ask questions and to give answers. And to have a stranger in their midst is not a way to build that comfort," she said.³

The parents appealed to school district leaders who upheld the principal's decision. They said that students are encouraged to talk with their parents about what is discussed in their sexuality education class but that having parents present would create an uncomfortable environment for the students.

The elementary school is offering parents a chance to preview the video and ask questions. The parents in question have not decided whether they will allow their son to attend the class.

New Mexico's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2000, New Mexico's abortion rate was 22 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.⁴
- In 2001, New Mexico's birth rate was 63 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁵

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

New Mexico received at least \$187,000 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2003. 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. The state match can be provided in part or in full by local groups. The amount of the state match is unclear. The Title V funds are controlled by the New Mexico Department of Health.

Part of this funding goes to a media campaign, *Mission Possible*, that targets teenagers 13 years and older with television commercials, radio spots, billboards, essay and poster contests, and a website. The website opens up to a page that states, "Mission Possible: Have you exercised your freedom to choose a healthy lifestyle?" From there visitors can see a list of local groups that support abstinence, read where youth rallies are being held, or view a section titled "Our Stars," which features four racially diverse women explaining why abstinence is important to them. One explains "the Abstinence-Only campaign is important to me because I can educate

² K. Christopher, "Parents Upset School Won't Let Them Sit In on Sex Ed," *KOBTV.com*, April 25, 2003.

³ K. Christopher, "Parents Barred From Child's Sex Ed Class," *The New Mexico Channel*, April 25, 2003.

⁴ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*, (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004). Available online at www.guttmacher.org.

⁵ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

others that abstinence is the only way to be. I also believe that in order to be truly safe from diseases and emotional scars is to be (sic) abstinent.”

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

There are two SPRANS–CBAE grantees in New Mexico: Socorro General Hospital and Maternal and Child Health Coordinator. There are no AFLA grantees in New Mexico.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program in FY 2003⁶

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
New Mexico Department of Health/ Mission Possible www.health.state.nm.us	\$187,000 federal	Title V
Socorro General Hospital 2002-2003	\$207,984	SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Maternal and Child Health Coordinator 2001-2004		SPRANS–CBAE (Implementation Grant)

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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⁶ SIECUS was not able to obtain exact funding information for all grantees.

New Mexico Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

NARAL Pro-Choice New Mexico
P.O. Box 97
Albuquerque, NM 87103
Phone: (505) 243-4443
www.naralnm.org

New Mexico NOW
P.O. Box 642
Santa Fe, NM 87504
www.hal-pc.org/~ginger/now_complete/

New Mexico Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice
P.O. Box 66433
Albuquerque, NM 87193
Phone: (505) 890-1010
www.nmrcrc.org

New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition
P.O. Box 35997
Alberquerque, NW 87176
Phone: (505) 254-8737
www.nmtpc.org

Planned Parenthood of New Mexico
719 San Mateo, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
Phone: (505) 265-5376
www.ppnewmex.org

New Mexico Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Right to Life Committee of New Mexico
2800 San Mateo NE, Suite 107
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Phone: (505) 881-4563
www.rtlnm.org

Newspapers in New Mexico

Albuquerque Journal
Charlie Moore
Medical/Health Editor
7777 Jefferson St., NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: (505) 823-3841

The Daily Times
Mark Lewis
Medical/Health Editor
201 N Allen Ave.
Farmington, NM 87401
Phone: (505) 564-4620

The Santa Fe New Mexican
Bruce Krasnow
Medical/Health Editor
202 E Marcy St.
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 986-3034