



NEW MEXICO

New Mexico received \$2,266,234 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2005.¹

New Mexico Sexuality Education Law and Policy

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. Outcomes of such instruction should include the “ability to demonstrate refusal skills, overcome peer pressure, and use decision-making skills.”

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.” The state neither suggests curriculum nor limits what may or may not be included in sexuality education instruction.

New Mexico does not require parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV/AIDS education nor does it say whether parents or guardians can remove their children from such classes.

See New Mexico Administrative Code 6.12.3.9.

Recent Legislation

Resolution Supports Secretary of Health’s Decision Regarding Restriction of Abstinence-Only Funding

House Joint Memorial 40, introduced in January 2006 and assigned to the Committee on Education, supports the Secretary of Health’s decision to limit abstinence-only programs to grades six and below and to provide comprehensive sexuality education to grades seven and above.

Bill Would Fund Pregnancy Prevention

Introduced in January 2005, Senate Bill 409 would appropriate \$2,600,000 to teen pregnancy-prevention and family-strengthening programs. One million would be used to fund in-school programs for pregnancy prevention, parenting, family strengthening, and career development for teen mothers and fathers. One million would be used at state universities to provide programs to prevent teen pregnancy and aid at-risk youth. The remaining \$600,000 would be used by the

human services department for community-based young fatherhood and teen pregnancy prevention programs.

SB 409 was referred to both the Senate Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Finance and was passed by the Senate Committee on Education. No further action was taken and the bill died at the end of the legislative session.

Events of Note

Film Documents Problems with Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program in April, 2006; Albuquerque, NM

“*Abstinence comes to Albuquerque*” is a documentary that follows Susan Rodriguez, the mother of a Cibola High School student, through her efforts to remove an abstinence-only-until-marriage program from a local school as well as the heated controversy that followed.

Rodriguez was spurred to take action after realizing that her daughter was receiving biased and inaccurate information about abortion and condom use, and had been pressured to sign a pledge promising to remain a virgin until marriage.²

“Their point of view is pushed on (students) with no discussion,” said Rodriguez. “These kids are being completely propagandized and brainwashed.”³

Rodriguez’s actions caused the New Mexico Department of Health to review *Best Choice*, *Game Plan*, and *Navigator*, curricula used in 25 public schools in the state. In the documentary, Department of Health Secretary Michelle Lujan Grisham states that the curricula indeed contain inaccurate and inappropriate information about abortion and condom use, and therefore will only be allowed for use in grades three through six.⁴ Older grades will receive comprehensive sexuality education, which will include information on contraception and sexually transmitted diseases.⁵

The film focuses on perspectives of a wide range of people including young people, parents, public health officials, educators, state officials, and national advocates on both sides of the debate. Included with the documentary is a “Frequently Asked Questions” section featuring national experts on sexuality education and a discussion guide to be used for educational purposes.⁶

*New Mexico Announces Changes to Title V Program
April, 2006; NM*

After numerous complaints about the medical inaccuracies within the curricula used by funded programs, the Department of Health took the bold step of restricting all Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding to grades six and below.⁷ According to the secretary of the New Mexico Department of Health, “the most effective way to protect kids is to discourage them from engaging in sexual activity. However, the reality is some adolescents do engage in sexual behavior. To be cognizant of that fact and do nothing about it is unconscionable. We want to make sure all of New Mexico’s children know how to protect themselves if they become sexually active.”⁸

Unfortunately, the federal government feels that the New Mexico Department of Health does not know what is best for the state and is refusing to let it use the funds in this way. Advocates continue to wait for the Governor’s response.

New Mexico's Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁹

- In 2005, 5% of female high school students and 12% of male high school students in New Mexico reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 11% of female high school students and 16% of male high school students in New Mexico reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 36% of female high school students and 30% of male high school students in New Mexico reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 50% of females and 67% of males in New Mexico reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 13% of males in New Mexico reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 33% of males in New Mexico reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- 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.¹⁰
- In 2002, New Mexico's birth rate was 62 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.¹¹

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

New Mexico received \$502,785 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2005. 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 may be provided in part or in full by local groups. The state match is provided through in-kind services by New Mexico's Title V sub-grantees. The Title V funds are controlled by the New Mexico Department of Health and distributed to nine sub-grantees: Apple Tree Education; Center Best Choice Educational Services; Cottonwood Prevention Services; Griffin and Associates; La Clinica de

Familia; Mesilla Valley Pregnancy Resource Center; Roswell Independent School District–SBHC; Socorro General Hospital; and SR Solutions.

Sub-grantees are allowed to use either of two curricula produced by Project Reality, *A.C. Green’s Game Plan* or *Navigator*. SIECUS reviewed *Game Plan* and found that in order to convince high school students to remain abstinent until marriage, the curriculum relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and family structure. In addition, *Game Plan* fails to provide important information on sexual health including how students can seek testing and treatment if they suspect they may have an STD. Finally, the format and underlying biases of the curriculum do not allow for cultural, community, and individual values, and discourage critical thinking and discussions of alternate points of view in the classroom. For example, *Game Plan* states that, “even if you’ve been sexually active, it’s never too late to say no. You can’t go back, but you can go forward. You might feel guilty or untrustworthy, but you can start over again.”¹²

SIECUS reviewed *Navigator* and found that it relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. *Navigator* fails to provide important information on sexual health, and the format and underlying biases of the curriculum dictate specific values and discourage critical thinking. For example, the authors explain “*Navigator* does not promote the use of contraceptives for teens. No contraceptive device is guaranteed to prevent pregnancy. Besides, students who do not exercise self-control to remain abstinent are not likely to exercise self-control in the use of a contraceptive device.”¹³

One of the sub-grantees, Best Choice Education Services, Inc. (BCES) hosts an annual Father/Daughter Purity Ball—the 4th annual ball was called “A Night of Promise.” The Purity Ball website (www.purityball.org) describes the event as “Christ-centered” and encourages attendees to promote it in their churches.¹⁴ The highlight of the ball is “a short program where both fathers and daughters will be encouraged to make a pledge of purity to one another and to God.”¹⁵ BCES also runs abstinence-only programs in public and private schools in the Albuquerque area.

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE)¹⁶ and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are three CBAE grantees in New Mexico: Best Choice Educational Services, Inc., Mescalero Apache School, and Socorro General Hospital. There are no AFLA grantees in New Mexico.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program in FY 2005

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
New Mexico Department of Health/Mission Possible	\$502,785 federal	Title V

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)
Length of Grant		
www.health.state.nm.us		
Apple Tree Education Center www.appletreeeducation.org	\$46,850	Title V sub-grantee
Best Choice Educational Services, Inc. DUAL GRANTEE 2004–2007 www.makethebestchoice.org	\$46,138 \$536,583	Title V sub-grantee CBAE
Cottonwood Prevention Services	\$59,528	Title V sub-grantee
Griffin and Associates www.griffinassoc.com	\$79,561	Title V sub-grantee
La Clinica de Familia	\$5,011	Title V sub-grantee
Mesilla Valley Pregnancy Resource Center	\$62,998	Title V sub-grantee
Roswell Independent School District–SBHC www.risd.k12.nm.us	\$81,440	Title V sub-grantee
Socorro General Hospital DUAL GRANTEE 2005–2008	\$75,000 \$799,883	Title V sub-grantee CBAE
SR Solutions	\$74,638	Title V sub-grantee

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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New Mexico Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

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Albuquerque, NM 87198
Phone: (505) 266-5915
www.aclu-nm.org

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

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

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

New Mexico Teen Pregnancy Coalition
PO Box 35997
Albuquerque, NM 87176
Phone: (505) 254-8737
www.nmtpc.org

Planned Parenthood of New Mexico
719 San Mateo, NE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
Phone: (505) 265-5976
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
Carolyn Flynn
Women's Interests Editor
7777 Jefferson St. NE
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Albuquerque Journal
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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 2005 begins on October 1, 2004 and ends on September 30, 2005.

² Leann Holt, "Sex-Ed Debate Flares Up; Panels Screen Abstinence Film," *Albuquerque Journal*, 10 April 2006, B8.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ New Mexico Department of Health, Press Release published on 8 April 2005.

⁶ For more information see the Documentary Educational Resources at <<http://www.der.org/films/abstinence-comes-to-albuquerque.html>>.

⁷ New Mexico Department of Health, Press Release published on 8 April 2005, accessed 19 April 2006 <<http://www.health.state.nm.us/pdf/PR-05-abstinence-04-07.pdf>>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 8 June 2006, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

¹⁰ *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 28 January 2005, <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/state_pregnancy_trends.pdf>.

¹¹ *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>>.

¹² Scott Phelps and Libby Gray, *A.C. Green's Game Plan* (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 2001). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *A.C. Green's Game Plan* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹³ Scott Phelps and Libby Gray, *Navigator: Finding Your Way to A Healthy and Successful Future* (Golf, IL: Project Reality, 2003). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *Navigator* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.

¹⁴ *Purity Ball*, Best Choice Education Services, Inc. (2004), accessed 8 February 2005, <<http://www.purityball.org/>>.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ In Fiscal Year 2004 SPRANS–CBAE was administered within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. In Fiscal Year 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).