



## WASHINGTON

***Washington received \$2,890,172 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2005.<sup>1</sup>***

### **Washington Sexuality Education Law and Policy**

School districts in Washington are not required to implement comprehensive sexuality education; however, they are required to teach sexually transmitted disease -(STD) and HIV/AIDS-prevention education and emphasize abstinence as a prevention method. This instruction must be given at least once each school year beginning in the fifth grade and must “teach that condoms and other artificial means of birth control are not a certain means of preventing the spread of the AIDS virus and reliance on condoms puts a person at risk for exposure to the disease.” Information must be current and medically accurate. In order to verify medical accuracy, the state Department of Health must review and approve all HIV curricula and supporting materials.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Department of Health developed voluntary guidelines titled the *Guidelines for Sexual Health and Disease Prevention*. These Guidelines promote broad, comprehensive, positive sexuality education programs that provide information about both abstinence and contraception, and are consistent with characteristics of programs that have been rigorously evaluated using quantitative research and have shown to be effective in reducing risk-taking behaviors. Washington also provides a voluntary curriculum, *KNOW HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum*, for use in grades five through twelve.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from HIV/AIDS-prevention education if they have attended one information session about the HIV/AIDS curriculum and presentation. If a school district chooses to provide sexuality education, parents may also remove their children from the class with written notification. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Revised Code of Washington Section 28A.230.070, *Guidelines for Sexual Health and Disease Prevention*, and *KNOW HIV/STD Prevention Curriculum*.

### **Recent Legislation**

#### *Two Pieces of Legislation Would Create Opt-In Policy*

Introduced in February 2006 and referred to the House Committee on Healthcare, House Bill 3201 would require parental consent in order for a student to participate in any instruction “relating to human sexuality.” HB 3201 gives detailed instruction to schools about the notification to be given to parents regarding such instruction to schools, and where schools may store sexuality education curriculum. It further provides for damages if a school does not follow these guidelines.

Introduced in February 2005 and referred to the House Committee on Education, House Bill 2139 would require written parental consent in order for a student to participate “in a

class, assembly, lecture, or other setting in which information regarding sex education or sexual conduct is presented.” Parental permission would also be required before a student could participate in HIV/AIDS education.

*Medical Accuracy Bill Introduced*

House Bill 1282 and Senate Bill 5306, introduced in January 2005, would require all school districts offering sexual health education to incorporate the Department of Health and Office of the Superintendent of Public School’s guidelines for sexual health information into their instruction.

The legislation also states that this education must emphasize abstinence, but not to the exclusion of other methods of prevention, and that it must include “medically accurate information about the effectiveness of contraceptives and other family planning options in a comprehensive manner.” The Department of Health is charged with adopting rules to determine what is medically accurate.

The legislation also states that “instruction and materials shall be age-appropriate and appropriate for use with students of all races, genders, sexual orientations, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds and students with disabilities.” In 2005, HB1282 passed out of the House, but must be revoted on in 2006 for procedural reasons and is therefore currently in the House Committee on Health Care. SB 5306 remains in the Senate Committees on Health and Long-Term Care.

*“Truth in Describing Sex Education Act” Introduced*

In January 2005, Senate Bill 5478 and House Bill 1656 were introduced “to help parents clearly identify the type of education being taught, assist community committee members in selecting the best materials to comply with school district policy, and support teachers in complying with their school district policy.”

Called the *Truth in Describing Sex Education Act*, the bills provide the federal government’s definition of “abstinence education” and mandate that all school districts decide whether their sexuality education programs fit within that definition and are thus “abstinence education,” or whether they “describe sexual behaviors not included in the definition” and are thus “comprehensive sex education” programs.

SB 5478 is in the Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12, and Higher Education and HB 1656 is in the House Committee on Health Care.

**Events of Note**

*Survey Shows Majority of Washington Residents Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education 2004; WA*

The results of an Advocates for Youth statewide survey conducted through the Global Strategy Group showed that respondents overwhelmingly support comprehensive sexuality education. When asked whether they supported sexuality education courses being taught to high school age students, 97% of parents replied that they did. Similarly, 78% of parents reported that they thought it was appropriate to teach ninth and tenth graders about contraception, birth control, and condoms.<sup>2</sup>

Respondents also made it clear that they opposed federally funded abstinence-only-until-marriage programs that prohibit young people’s access to “information about birth control and condoms for the prevention of pregnancy, STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases), and HIV/AIDS.”<sup>3</sup> Nearly seven in 10 respondents opposed abstinence-only-until-marriage programs and 57% disagreed with the supposition that, “giving young people information about birth control and condoms in schools sends a mixed message and encourages young people to have intercourse.”<sup>4</sup>

“When we listen to the voices of parents, we hear a resounding call for honest sex education in our country’s schools,” commented James Wagoner, president of Advocates for Youth. “It’s time for our policymakers—both at the national and state levels—to pull their heads out of the sand and fund programs that their citizens want—programs that work to protect teens’ health and lives.”<sup>5</sup>

*High School Bans Book Because of Parents’ Complaints*  
*August 2004; Federal Way, WA*

The mother of a 15-year-old at Todd Beamer High School in Federal Way, WA, became upset after reading a portion of a novel assigned in her son’s ninth-grade English class. The book, *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*, focuses on censorship during the Cultural Revolution in China and the passage in question deals with a character’s first sexual experience.

The mother felt the passage was inappropriate subject matter for high school students and further objected when several students drew pictures of the scenes for a class assignment. The parent and five others gathered 32 signatures on a petition and took their complaints to the school board. The parent also pulled her son from the class and filed a complaint against the teacher.

The book was on the school district’s list of approved materials and had been taught the previous semester with no complaints. The teacher defended the book’s value, saying that, “a healthy, well-adjusted 14- or 15-year-old would not have any difficulty handling the scene” and that he is concerned that “the expertise of the district’s top professionals has been trumped by a narrow viewpoint.”<sup>6</sup> Regarding the drawings, the teacher said, “I recall only three pictures that depicted the scene. . . . Two were drawn with sensitivity and maturity. One was so subtle as not even to be noticeable. I would not characterize any of the three pictures as ‘explicit’ or ‘graphic.’”<sup>7</sup>

The district review committee rejected the parent’s challenge citing the novel’s “artistic merit” and “sensitive treatment of sexual content.”<sup>8</sup> However, the decision was overruled by the superintendent and the book was pulled from the ninth grade reading list. The superintendent also ordered all of the following year’s reading lists to be presented to the school board for advance approval and for the secondary schools’ reading lists to be sent out to parents during the summer.

The school board is also considering drafting a “decency policy” to prohibit sexually explicit material in the classroom.

**Washington’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note**

- In 2000, Washington’s abortion rate was 26 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2002, women ages 15–19 accounted for 19% of the 25,446 total abortions performed in Washington.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2002, Washington’s birth rate was 33 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 43 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>11</sup>
- In 2003, Washington’s Chlamydia infection rate was 2,273 per 100,000 women ages 15–19 and 392 per 100,000 men ages 15–19.<sup>12</sup>

- In 2003, Washington’s gonorrhea infection rate was 168 per 100,000 women ages 15–19<sup>13</sup> and 109 per 100,000 men ages 15–19.<sup>14</sup>

### **Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding**

Washington received \$814,633 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. As of 2003, all state matching funds were cut; the state match is now completely provided through in-kind support from partners in the community-based literacy projects.

In 2005, the Washington Department of Health (DOH) used Title V funds to launch an abstinence-based statewide public awareness campaign targeting young people ages 10–14 and parents of young teens. The campaign’s goal is to reduce the number of unintended teen pregnancies through abstinence-based media messages that communicate the importance of healthy relationships, model good decision-making skills, and encourage effective parent-teen communication. The campaign includes two websites ([www.nosexnoproblems.com](http://www.nosexnoproblems.com) and [www.talktoyourkids.com](http://www.talktoyourkids.com)) as well as billboards, radio and television ads, and pre-movie spots.

DOH also implemented community-based media literacy projects throughout the state in Fiscal Year 2005. The goal is to reduce teen pregnancies by delaying initiation of early and unsafe sexual activity and by raising youth awareness around media representation of human sexuality. The project’s sites will use an abstinence-based media literacy curriculum to help youth deconstruct media messages related to sexual behavior.

#### *Title V Evaluation*

Washington evaluated its Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in 2003, reviewing both its Abstinence Education Program (AEP) and *Teen Aware* abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. The evaluations consisted of pre- and post-tests surveys and comparison groups. Intent to abstain was significantly greater among students enrolled in the AEP program than those in the comparison group; however, when analyzed site-by-site, none of the projects was able to show statistical significance.<sup>15</sup> Students who participated in *Teen Aware* showed a more favorable response to abstinence than those in the comparison group, although about a third of them reported that they did not like the program.<sup>16</sup>

### **Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE)<sup>17</sup> and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees**

There are four CBAE grantees in Washington State: AWARE, Inc., Clarkston School District, Pregnancy Resource Center, and Teen-Aid. There are no AFLA grantees in Washington.

AWARE, Inc. has used at least a part of its CBAE grant to create a website, [www.awareprogram.net](http://www.awareprogram.net), much of which focuses on STDs. One section includes a chart that lists several different types of STDs. The chart excessively focuses on the end stages of STDs and does not mention that the majority of STDs are curable and will never reach these end stages. In addition, the chart omits important information, such as where young people can get tested and that many individuals who are infected may have no symptoms.<sup>18</sup>

The website also features commercials which tend to be fear-based and rely on shame. One commercial, titled “Fairytale,” implies that teenage mothers will not be able to find their “prince

charming.” Another, “Play by Play,” attempts to instill shame in young people who have an STD. And a third, “Love,” implies that youth who are sexually active do not respect their partners.<sup>19</sup>

Teen-Aid’s CBAE grant is titled *I’ve Got Connections II* and is a continuation of an earlier CBAE grant that expired in 2004. According to Teen-Aid’s website, “the heart of this grant is to develop a saturation model that will enable small organizations to reach communities with the abstinence until marriage message using a variety of vehicles.”<sup>20</sup>

*I’ve Got Connections II* uses outreach, media, and written materials, including billboards, radio commercials, and speakers. The billboards advertise a phone line that provides information on events to keep children active, information on “sexuality issues of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and relationships,” and connections to “pregnancy counseling and services.”<sup>21</sup> The project’s brochures and posters discuss topics such as “refusal skills, compatibility comparisons for dating, assessment of dating relationships, boundary setting, understanding the benefits of marriage, and returning to abstinence.” *I’ve Got Connections II* also offers curricula for elementary, middle, and high school students. Speakers for the project are recruited and trained through the program and supplement the regular curriculum or presenter in a community setting.

Teen-Aid also produces several curricula, including *Sexuality, Commitment & Family* and *Me, My World, My Future*. SIECUS reviewed these curricula and found that they rely on fear and shame, include inaccurate and exaggerated information about condom failure, and contain biased messages about gender, sexual orientation, family structure, and pregnancy options. For example, in one lesson in *Sexuality, Commitment & Family*, students write an essay titled “If Wombs Had Windows,” in which they speculate how individuals and society might behave differently if, “we could see the unborn child developing in the womb.” In the condom lesson from *Me, My World, My Future*, teachers compare using a condom to playing Russian roulette.<sup>22</sup>

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

<b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantees</b> <b>Length of Grant</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)</b>
Washington State Department of Health  <a href="http://www.doh.wa.gov">www.doh.wa.gov</a>	\$814,633 federal	Title V
AWARE, Inc  2005–2008  <a href="http://www.awareprogram.net">www.awareprogram.net</a>	\$130,925	CBAE
Clarkston School District  2005–2008	\$753,614	CBAE

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<b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantees</b> <b>Length of Grant</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, and AFLA)</b>
Pregnancy Resource Center 2002–2005	\$391,000	CBAE
Teen-Aid 2004–2007 <a href="http://www.teen-aid.org">www.teen-aid.org</a>	\$800,000	CBAE

**Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator**

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Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coordinator  
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Olympia, WA 98504  
Phone: (360) 236-3515

**Washington Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

ACLU of Washington  
705 Second Ave., Suite 300  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone: (206) 624-2184  
[www.aclu-wa.org](http://www.aclu-wa.org)

League of Women Voters of Washington  
4710 University Way NE, Suite 214  
Seattle, WA 98105  
Phone: (206) 622-8961  
[www.lwvwa.org](http://www.lwvwa.org)

Lifelong AIDS Alliance  
1002 East Seneca  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Phone: (206) 328-8979  
[www.lifelongaidsalliance.org](http://www.lifelongaidsalliance.org)

NARAL Pro-Choice Washington  
811 First Ave., Suite 456  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone: (206) 624-1990  
[www.wanaral.org](http://www.wanaral.org)

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Washington  
PO Box 7648  
Olympia, WA 98507  
Phone: (360) 705-1965

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of Washington  
1415 N.E. 43<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Seattle, WA 98105  
Phone: (206) 633-1998

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Washington Education Association  
(WEA)  
32032 Weyerhaeuser Way S  
Federal Way, WA 98001  
Phone: (253) 941-6700  
[www.washingtonea.org](http://www.washingtonea.org)

Washington State Medical Association  
(WSMA)  
2033 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 1100  
Seattle, WA 98121  
Phone: (206) 441-9762  
[www.wsma.org](http://www.wsma.org)

Washington State PTA  
2003 65<sup>th</sup> Ave. W  
Tacoma, WA 98466  
Phone: (253) 565-2153  
[www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org)

**Washington Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Human Life of Washington  
14400 Bel-Red Rd. #207  
Bellevue, WA 98007  
Phone: (425) 641-9345

**Newspapers in Washington**

*Bellingham Weekly*  
Tim Johnson  
Executive Editor  
1329 N. State St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
Phone: (360) 676-1966

*King Co. Journal Newspapers*  
Robert Whale  
Editor  
600 Washington Ave. S  
Kent, WA 98032  
Phone: (253) 872-6600

*Korea Times Seattle Edition*  
Hyunsuk Kim  
Community News Reporter  
12532 Aurora Ave. N  
Seattle, WA 98133  
Phone: (206) 622-2229

*The Local Planet*  
Education Editor  
522 W. Riverside Ave.  
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Phone: (509) 624-3675

*The News Tribune*  
Alex Otto  
Health & Medicine Editor  
PO Box 11000  
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Phone: (253) 597-8616

*Northwest Family News*  
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*Tri-City Herald*

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Editorial Page Editor  
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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Global Strategy Group, *Poll on Attitudes toward Sexuality Education: Survey among Washington State Residents*, (Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth and Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Washington, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Planned Parenthood of Western Washington, "Poll Shows Washington Residents Endorse Comprehensive Sex Education for Youth," Press Release published 27 January 2004, accessed 14 January 2004, <[http://www.ppww.org/Public\\_Affairs/Poll.html](http://www.ppww.org/Public_Affairs/Poll.html)>.

<sup>6</sup> Jeffrey Barker, "Sex In Literature—Who's to Judge How Far to Go?," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 22 May 2004, accessed Lexis-Nexis, 4 June 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "A Fine Novel Gets Mistreated in FWay School Reading Flap," *The News Tribune* (Tacoma, WA), 12 May 2004. accessed Lexis-Nexis, 22 May 2004.

<sup>9</sup> *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](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/state_pregnancy_trends.pdf)>.

<sup>10</sup> *Washington State Pregnancy and Induced Abortion Statistics 2002* (Olympia WA: Washington State Department of Health, December 2003), 18, accessed 7 February 2005, <[http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphi/chs/chs-data/Public/Abort\\_report\\_2002.pdf](http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehsphi/chs/chs-data/Public/Abort_report_2002.pdf)>.

<sup>11</sup> *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>>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> D. McBride, P. Noyes, M. Wear, C. Malloy, *Abstinence Education program Evaluation: Final Report, October 2003* (Olympia, WA: Prepared for the Offices of Maternal and Child Health Washington State Department of Health, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> D. McBride, P. Noyes, M. Wear, T. Villanueva et al. *Washington State's Teen Aware Program Evaluation: Final Report, December 2003*, (Olympia, WA: Prepared for the Office of Maternal and Child Health Washington State Department of Health, 2003).

<sup>17</sup> 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).

<sup>18</sup> *STD's (Sexually Transmitted Diseases), AWARE – Abstinence, Wait-training, and Relationship Education* (2006), accessed 25 January 2006,

<<http://www.awareprogram.net/index.php?aw1=stds>>.

<sup>19</sup> *Multimedia, AWARE – Abstinence, Wait-training, and Relationship Education* (2006), accessed 25 January 2006,

<<http://www.awareprogram.net/index.php?aw1=multimedia>>.

<sup>20</sup> *I've Got Connections*, (Washington: Teen-Aid, Inc., 11 August 2004), accessed 17 February 2005, <[http://www.teen-aid.org/Ive\\_Got\\_Connections.htm](http://www.teen-aid.org/Ive_Got_Connections.htm)>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Steve Potter and Nancy Roach, *Sexuality, Commitment & Family* (Spokane, WA: Teen-Aid, 1990, HIV chapter revised 1998); Nancy Roach and LeAnna Benn, *Me, My World, My Future* (Spokane WA: Teen-Aid, 1993 HIV chapter revised 1998). For more information see, *Toward a Sexually Healthy America, Abstinence-only-until-marriage programs that Try to Keep Our Youth Scared Chaste* at

<[http://www.siecus.org/pubs/tsha\\_scaredchaste.pdf](http://www.siecus.org/pubs/tsha_scaredchaste.pdf)>.