



SIECUS

State Profile

FLORIDA

The Department of Health and community-based organizations in Florida received \$12,949,133 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

Florida Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Florida law states that in order for high school students to graduate, they must receive one-half credit in “life management skills” in either ninth or tenth grade. The course must include instruction in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), family life, the benefits of sexual abstinence, and the consequences of teen pregnancy. It also states that these “descriptions for comprehensive health education shall not interfere with the local determination of appropriate curriculum which reflects local values and concerns.”

School boards may decide to allow additional instruction regarding HIV/AIDS. Such instruction may include information about “means used to control the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.” All instruction and course material must:

- teach abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school-age students while teaching the benefits of monogamous heterosexual marriage;
- emphasize that abstinence from sexual activity is a certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, including acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and other associated health problems;
- teach that each student has the power to control personal behavior and encourage students to base actions on reasoning, self-esteem, and respect for others; and
- provide instruction and material that is appropriate for the grade and age of the student.

Florida standards, titled *Sunshine State Standards for Health and Physical Fitness*, do not mention instruction in HIV/AIDS, STDs, or sexuality education.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any or all of sexuality education and/or STD/HIV education classes. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Florida Statute, Title XLVIII, Chapter 1003, Section 42, 43, and 46.

Recent Legislation

Florida Healthy Teens Act Introduced

House Bill 449, also known as the *Florida Healthy Teens Act*, was introduced in March 2008. It would have required public schools or third-party organizations receiving state funding to conduct comprehensive, medically accurate, factual, and age-appropriate sexual health programs. Programs would have been

required to emphasize the value of abstinence while not ignoring those adolescents who have had sexual intercourse; to encourage family communication about sexuality, and to be appropriate for students of all races, genders, religions, and sexual orientations. The bill passed out of the Senate K-12 committee but failed to be heard in the House and died.

Bill Calls for Amending the Florida Civil Rights Act

House Bill 639 would have amended the Florida Civil Rights Act to include the unlawful discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The bill was sent to the House Policy and Budget Council, and died in May 2007.

Bill to Require HPV Information and Vaccination for Middle School Students

House Bill 561, introduced in January 2007, would have required public and private middle schools in the state provide certain students and their parents or guardians with information about human papillomavirus (HPV), the HPV vaccine, and the link between HPV and cervical cancer. It would have prohibited some students from admission into school without providing evidence of vaccination. The bill was sent to the House Schools and Learning Council, and died in May 2007.

Legislation to Require Funding for AIDS Education in Public Schools

Senate Bill 2248, introduced in March 2007, referred to the Committees on Education Pre-K-12, Health Policy, and Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations, would have required the Department of Education to fund AIDS education activities in public schools. The funding would have been appropriated by the Legislature to the Department of Education. The bill died.

Prevention First Act Introduced

In February 2007, House Bill 1191 and Senate Bill 1156 were introduced in the Florida State Legislature to create the *Prevention First Act*. The *Prevention First Act* had three main purposes. This first was to require the Secretary of Health to include information on family planning and referrals to family planning clinics on the Department of Health's website in order to assist women and families in preventing unintended pregnancies. The second purpose of the package was to require the Department of Education to develop a plan to provide comprehensive family life and sexuality education no later than the 2010–2011 school year. Such comprehensive family life and sexuality education must be medically accurate and age-appropriate, and it must promote responsible behaviors, including abstinence. The third purpose of the package was to require health care practitioners to prescribe or provide rape survivors with emergency contraception if it was medically appropriate and they had obtained the consent of the rape survivor. HB 1191 was referred to the Committee on Health Quality by the Healthcare Council, while SB 1156 was referred to the Committees on Health Policy, Education Pre-K-12, Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations, and Health and Human Services Appropriations. Both bills died.

The same legislation had been introduced in 2006 with House Bill 1073 and Senate Bill 2458. Both bills also died.

Parental Right to Know Act Introduced

House Bill 663 and Senate Bill 162 would have required the principal of any school that receives abstinence-only-until-marriage funding or provides such programming to students in grades six through 12 to send a notice home to parents of affected students. This notice would inform parents that their child is participating in an abstinence-only-until-marriage program and that the program will not teach about methods for preventing unintended pregnancy and the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, other than abstinence. It must also tell parents that they have the right to remove their child from such instruction. The bill also provided remedies for parents who believed they did not

receive the proper notification. HB 663 was introduced in January 2007 and SB 162 was pre-filed in December 2006; in January 2007, the bills were referred to their respective Committees on Pre-K through 12 Education, the Committees on Health Policy, the Judiciary Committees, and the Education Appropriations Committees. Both bills died.

Events of Note

Battle Over Update to HIV/AIDS Education December, 2007; St. Lucie County, FL

In October of 2006, officials in the St. Lucie schools, health professionals, and community members came together as the Executive Roundtable to explore the possibility of revising the county's sexuality education and HIV/AIDS-prevention programs in public schools after learning that, among other things, St. Lucie County has the highest incidence of HIV/AIDS among African Americans in any Florida county. In May 2007, the Executive Roundtable announced its recommendation of *Get Real About AIDS*, an HIV-prevention curriculum endorsed by the state Department of Education which had at one point designated a "program that works" by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).²

Some community members, however, were not pleased with this choice. A local pastor worried that the program promotes condoms too readily and that "an agenda such as this one could not encourage abstinence."

In response to the small, but vocal opposition by some community members, the superintendent preemptively took some, potentially controversial, issues off the agenda. In school board hearings in August 2007, the superintendent added "alternative lifestyles" to the list of topics that would not be discussed in the new curriculum. He reiterated that the focus should be on health education, not "variations of sexual behavior."³

Still, there was a continued debate over the lessons on condom use and contraception. The superintendent, however, was adamant that some of those lessons had to be kept. In December 2007, the school board voted 4-1 to approve the curriculum with the superintendent's changes.

District Attempts to Ban GSA, Accuses it of Being "Sex-Based" Club November 2007; Okeechobee, FL

A controversy began in the fall of 2006 when five high school students approached their principal asking for permission to start a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA). School administrators denied the request; first saying that they didn't allow any clubs, then that there were already too many clubs, and ultimately that a GSA ran counter to the school's abstinence-only-until-marriage policy.⁴

The students sought the help of the ACLU, which filed suit against the principal and the school board in November claiming that banning the GSA violated the Equal Access Act. The Equal Access Act of 1984 states that school districts cannot restrict extracurricular clubs on the basis of "religious, political, philosophical or other content."

At the start of the controversy, the school board had the support of the Liberty Counsel, the legal arm of Jerry Falwell's evangelical ministry, which offered to represent the district in the lawsuit. The organization, however, quickly changed its mind and backed out because it was concerned that a win in the case might also restrict the access of Christian student groups to meet on school campuses.⁵

In fact, it was Christian conservatives who championed the Equal Access Act in 1984 in an attempt to secure the rights of Christian clubs to meet on school premises. In recent years, courts have found that it grants these same rights to GSAs; students in Florida, Georgia, Illinois, and Kentucky, among others, have secured the right to form GSAs at their schools.

Despite the outcomes of these previous court cases, the Okeechobee school board pressed on claiming that the GSA was a "sex-based" club and allowing it to form would violate the district's

abstinence-only-until-marriage policy. In April 2007, a U.S. District Judge issued a preliminary injunction allowing the GSA to meet on school grounds during the duration of the court case. In his decision, the judge rejected the district's argument that the GSA is a "sex-based" club.⁶

Nonetheless, the school board decided to continue with the case and, in October 2007, it even voted to explicitly ban any club that is "sex-based or based upon any sexual grouping, orientation or activity of any kind."⁷ Though this seemed like a blatant move against the GSA, because of the judge's ruling, this new policy could not be applied to the GSA, at least until the case is settled. In the meantime, the GSA continues to be allowed to meet.

In November 2007, attorneys for the school board announced a new plan to rely heavily on expert testimony in their attempt to ban the GSA from meeting on school grounds in the future. Lawyers for the district have said that they plan to use four experts who will testify on the "negative health effects of homosexual sex" as well as the "serious consequences" of heterosexual teenage sexual activity including teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and "poorer emotional health."

A judge agreed to postpone the date of the trial originally scheduled for March 2008 until June 2008 to give the ACLU more time to prepare for this new strategy which a lawyer for the ACLU characterized as "...the most rabidly homophobic response the school board could have taken."⁸ SIECUS will continue to monitor the ongoing controversy and lawsuit.

*Crisis Pregnancy Centers Barred from Schools
August 2007; Brevard County, FL*

Parents in Brevard County, FL, raised objections to First Defense, an organization affiliated with a crisis pregnancy center (CPC) that was teaching abstinence-only-until-marriage lessons to high school students. CPCs typically advertise as providing medical services and then use anti-choice propaganda, misinformation, and fear and shame tactics to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancy from exercising their right to choose. First Defense was the only outside organization approved to teach sexuality education in the district schools, but parents complained that its program exaggerated contraceptive failure rates and relied on damaging gender stereotypes.⁹

District officials originally responded to the objections by saying that they had no intention of taking anything other than an abstinence-only-until-marriage approach, but they did agree to accept proposals from other outside groups and to review First Defense's program. The superintendent convened a 15-member advisory committee of parents, teachers, principals, and school administrators to review the programs and provide recommendations.

In addition to First Defense, two other groups submitted proposals to the advisory board. The Apostolic Ministries of America, Inc., a church from a neighboring community, also wanted to teach an abstinence-only-until-marriage program while Planned Parenthood of Greater Orlando, Inc. proposed teaching an abstinence-based sex education program that incorporated information on the effectiveness of contraceptives in preventing disease and pregnancy.

Each group gave a 45-minute presentation about its program to the advisory committee. The committee was instructed to evaluate each group based on the district's abstinence-only policy, which states that instruction should emphasize "the benefits of abstinence," present "abstinence as the only certain way of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases," and present contraceptive information "in the context of a failed approach to sexual activity." The policy also states that instruction should not "include discussion about contraceptive options except through student-initiated questions."¹⁰

Working with those guidelines, the advisory committee recommended the two abstinence-only groups and rejected Planned Parenthood's proposal. One dissenting member of the committee recommended that the district reject all proposals and require health teachers to teach the whole program. "As a teacher

and a school system, our job is to teach the truth, and if we're not giving (students) all the information on condoms, then we're not telling the whole truth," she said.¹¹

The superintendent agreed. He rejected the proposals of all three groups and suggested that the district add a new guide on condoms and birth control and require that all material be taught by the schools' health teachers. "I think it's important that high school children have information. I've never been afraid of information," he said.¹²

In August of 2007, three months after the debate started, the school board voted to accept the superintendent's recommendations and add more information about contraception. The new policy will apply to middle schools and high schools. All schools, however, will continue to have an "opt-out" policy which allows parents to take their children out of the class if they object to the content.

Palm Beach County Schools Dragging Its Feet on Curriculum Updates
July 2007; Palm Beach County, FL

In 2006, after calls from the Palm Beach County Health Department and concerns over increasing rates of sexual activity and pregnancy among middle school students, the Palm Beach County School District agreed to update its sexuality education resources. A year later, however, health department officials were still critical, citing little improvement by the district. As of July 2007, only the sixth and seventh grade programs had been completed and school officials do not expect to have new lessons for all grades until 2009.

Moreover, health department officials are not satisfied with those programs that have been completed. The department's director characterized the sixth and seventh grade materials as lacking details and not in line with the comprehensive approach endorsed by the school board.¹³

The district blames the delay on bureaucracy and the cost of the updates. "If you are looking at training teachers on a whole grade level and purchasing materials, it does have a price tag, and you already know that we do have a budget crunch," explained the coordinator of district health services.¹⁴ The district has refused to fast-track the project by turning it over the health department.

School Board Dismisses Parental Permission for Clubs
December 2006; Hillsborough County, FL

In December 2006, the Hillsborough School District rejected a proposal to require students to receive parental permission to join clubs, ending months of dispute. The decision came in response to the formation of a Gay-Straight Alliance at Newsome High School.

In September 2005, the Newsome principal required students to receive parental permission to attend GSA meetings, but did not impose the rule on any other school club. The ACLU suggested that the principal's actions might be a violation of the Equal Access Act.¹⁵

In response, the school district created a task force, comprised of students, community members, and educators, to field concerns and opinions over the GSA and other clubs before drafting a resolution. The group suggested an "opt-out" policy under which parents may notify the school if there is any club in which they do not want their child to participate. Task force members felt that enforcing an "opt-in" policy—one that requires parental permission before students could participate in any clubs—would lead to less club attendance, especially for the GSA.¹⁶ In December 2006, the board approved the suggested opt-out policy.¹⁷ The board also created a new committee to investigate alternative ways to keep parents informed and engaged.

School District Unblocks Access to Some LGBT Sites
December 2006; Palm Beach County, FL

In December 2006, after months of pressure from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Human Rights Council, the Palm Beach School District started to unblock access to several Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) websites.

The websites of a number of organizations were previously censored by the district's filtering software, categorizing them as "Gay/Lesbian." At the same time, students were still allowed to visit the websites of the Traditional Values Coalition, the American Family Association, Focus on the Family, and the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), all organizations that work to curtail the rights of LGBT individuals.¹⁸

A student at Inlet Grove High School publicly revealed this disparity in access when he wrote an article for the high school's news site. The article was subsequently blocked by the district's web filter.

The ACLU reviewed the filtering policy at the request of the Palm Beach Human Rights Council, a local organization that had access to its site blocked. A lawyer for the ACLU commented, "If their blocking software prevents kids, particularly middle and high school kids, from having access to information about gay rights and public health issues, but on the other hand allows access to religious group Web sites that are hostile to gay and lesbian legal rights and public health, that constitutes censorship."¹⁹

The web-filtering software used by the district, WebFilter, classifies websites into categories and then allows an administrator to choose what categories to block. One of the categories used by WebFilter is "Gay/Lesbian," which, according to the software maker's parent company, includes "sites that provide information, promote, or cater to gay or lesbian lifestyles."²⁰ While the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) and Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) fell into the "Gay/Lesbian" category, NARTH did not. NARTH is categorized as a "Health" website, despite the fact that it's the leading advocate for "conversion therapy." "Conversion therapy" or "reparative therapy" refers to psychotherapy aimed at changing a client's sexual orientation and eliminating homosexual desires. It has been disavowed by nearly every major professional health and mental health association.²¹ The remaining unblocked organizations that feature anti-gay material are categorized as "Political/Activist Groups."

The filter was reset to allow access to the local gay-straight alliance as well as the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN), and the Human Rights Campaign.²² A number of LGBTQ websites, however, including the GLAAD, PFLAG, and the National Center for Lesbian Rights, were still blocked as of December 2006.²³ The district noted that it may change its computer filtering system.²⁴

Teacher Suspended for Showing Gory Anti-Abortion Film
October 2006; Fort Lauderdale, FL

A Ft. Lauderdale charter school placed an art teacher on indefinite suspension after he showed sixth graders a film with inappropriate material.

The film, made by the teacher, was intended to display "good and evil" and depicted graphic images of abortions, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Holocaust. Parents complained that the content of the film was too explicit for children. One student who saw the film described a scene to reporters: "There was this disturbing picture of a baby's hand reaching out from the Mom's stomach and grabbing the doctor's finger, and there was a baby in a bucket."²⁵ The teacher said that he had no regrets about showing the film to students.²⁶

Florida's Youth: Statistical Information of Note²⁷

- In 2007, 45% of female high school students and 54% of male high school students in Florida reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 13% of male high school students in Florida reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 12% of female high school students and 21% of male high school students in Florida reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 35% of female high school students and 38% of male high school students in Florida reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 59% of females and 73% of males in Florida reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 20% of females and 11% of males in Florida reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 18% of females and 26% of males in Florida reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, 88% of high school students in Florida reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Broward County, Florida

- In 2007, 44% of female high school students and 56% of male high school students in Broward County, Florida reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Broward County, Florida reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 10% of female high school students and 23% of male high school students in Broward County, Florida reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.

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- In 2007, 31% of female high school students and 38% of male high school students in Broward County, Florida reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 65% of females and 77% of males in Broward County, Florida reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 12% of females and 6% of males in Broward County, Florida reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 14% of females and 24% of males in Broward County, Florida reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, 89% of high school students in Broward County, Florida reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Hillsborough County, Florida

- In 2007, 45% of female high school students and 55% of male high school students in Hillsborough County, Florida reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 5% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students in Hillsborough County, Florida reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 12% of female high school students and 19% of male high school students in Hillsborough County, Florida reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 38% of female high school students and 36% of male high school students in Hillsborough County, Florida reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 52% of females and 67% of males in Hillsborough County, Florida reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.

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- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 18% of females and 5% of males in Hillsborough County, Florida reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 17% of females and 26% of males in Hillsborough County, Florida reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, 92% of high school students in Hillsborough County, Florida reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.

Miami-Dade County, Florida

- In 2007, 44% of female high school students and 58% of male high school students in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 3% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 8% of female high school students and 25% of male high school students in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 35% of female high school students and 40% of male high school students in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 61% of females and 80% of males in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 7% of females and 6% of males in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 16% of females and 24% of males in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.

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- In 2007, 86% of high school students in Miami-Dade County, Florida reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Orange County, Florida

- In 2007, 44% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students in Orange County, Florida reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 4% of female high school students and 12% of male high school students in Orange County, Florida reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 10% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students in Orange County, Florida reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 34% of female high school students and 31% of male high school students in Orange County, Florida reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 60% of females and 75% of males in Orange County, Florida reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 15% of females and 9% of males in Orange County, Florida reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 17% of females and 19% of males in Orange County, Florida reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, 89% of high school students in Orange County, Florida reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Palm Beach County, Florida

- In 2007, 45% of female high school students and 51% of male high school students in Palm Beach County, Florida reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 2% of female high school students and 11% of male high school students in Palm Beach County, Florida reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to

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4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students nationwide.

- In 2007, 8% of female high school students and 21% of male high school students in Palm Beach County, Florida reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, 36% of female high school students and 35% of male high school students in Palm Beach County, Florida reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 36% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 66% of females and 71% of males in Palm Beach County, Florida reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 19% of females and 10% of males in Palm Beach County, Florida reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 22% of females and 30% of males in Palm Beach County, Florida reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 18% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2007, 86% of high school students in Palm Beach County, Florida reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

The Florida Department of Health received \$2,521,581 in federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2007. 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. In Florida, the state allocated \$1.5 million in funds from general revenues to make the match. Sub-grantees also contribute to the match.

A portion of the state funds is used to support statewide community outreach events and Florida's public media campaign, "It's Great to Wait." The media campaign features a website for parents and teens, www.greattowait.com.²⁸ The homepage of the site presents a variety of fear-based statistics such as "According to Florida Vital Statistics, thousands of Florida teens will catch a sexually transmitted disease each year" and "According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 8 out of 10 teen fathers do not marry the mother of their child."²⁹

The website goes on to promote marriage, stating, "Marriage is a mutually committed relationship with many benefits. A marriage allows for emotional stability, companionship, love and trust. A faithful marriage, wherein both partners are monogamous, alleviates the worry of sexually transmitted diseases and promotes a healthy sexual relationship."³⁰

The website also includes a game for young people called “Road of Life.” The object of the game is to reach “your goal in life”; however in order to get there you must dodge other cars and hazards or the game is over.

The Department of Health distributes both federal and state funds to sub-grantees. There are 10 sub-grantees: ABST (Abstinence Between Strong Teens); Catholic Charities, Diocese of Palm Beach; Investing In Our Youth, Inc.; Project S.O.S.; Putnam County Health Department (Teen Hope); Recapturing the Vision International; Resources for Women, Inc.; River Region Human Services, Inc.; Seminole County Healthy Start Coalition, Inc.; and the Washington County Health Department.

Resources for Women, Inc. is a crisis pregnancy center. Crisis pregnancy centers typically advertise as providing medical services and then use anti-abortion propaganda, misinformation, and fear and shame tactics to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancy from exercising their right to choose. More often than not, crisis pregnancy centers have ties to a specific religion. Resources for Women explains that its mission is, “To present the life changing teachings of Jesus Christ by promoting biblical values of the sanctity of human life, pre-marital abstinence and alternatives to abortion.”³¹ The organization hosts an annual Walk for Life event.³²

Resources for Women, Inc. uses a program called “Pure Energy” in schools.³³ The website for Pure Energy, an abstinence-only-until-marriage program, uses fear and shame tactics to dissuade students from becoming sexually active. Under the heading “Why Care?” the site lists several statistics such as “2 out of 3 teen moms live in poverty.” The website also includes the following list under the heading, “SOMEONE’S BABY’S DADDY,” “...Child Support \$\$\$ to pay for diapers, food, Dr. bills, daycare...A huge responsibility.” These messages do little to educate young people about unintended pregnancy and provide no information that can help them avoid these situations.

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

There are sixteen CBAE grantees in Florida including two crisis pregnancy centers: Pregnancy Center of Pinellas County (formerly Pinellas Crisis Pregnancy Center) and Pregnancy Care Center of Plant. City, There are four AFLA grantees in Florida: Beta Center, Inc., Boys and Girls Clubs of Sarasota County, Switchboard of Miami (receives two grants), and Urban League of Broward.

In addition to its CBAE grant, Abstinence Between Strong Teens (ABST) receives fund from the Florida Department of Health and Metro Dade County. ABST states, “Our abstinence education programs have reached more than 100,000 participants in the past 15 years.”³⁴ ABST conducts several programs including “Boys 2 Men,” “Closing The Gap,” “Metro-Dade,” and “Project Hope.”³⁵ Project Hope and Metro Dade are geared towards boys and girls ages 9–18, while Boys 2 Men focuses on boys ages 12–18. Boys 2 Men includes a mentoring component, “Men of Character,” and a parent component.³⁶

ABST conducts abstinence-only-until-marriage programming in different venues throughout the Miami-Dade and Broward county areas including public, private, and Christian schools, churches, youth groups, low-income housing projects, special interest groups, sororities, and fraternities.³⁷

ABST also sponsors “Abstinence Clubs” in various high schools several of which participated in the “National Day of Purity” on February 14, 2006. This event featured Lakita Garth, a former beauty queen who travels the country speaking to young people about abstinence-until-marriage.³⁸ Garth refers to herself as “one of the country’s leading abstinence advocates.”³⁹ Ms. Garth encourages visitors to her website to “link up” with friends who share her mission, including Club Varsity, which promotes the use of *Abstinence ‘Til Marriage (ATM) Cards*, a type of virginity pledge.⁴⁰

These pledges, as used by Ms. Garth, are promises that young people sign to remain abstinent until marriage. Research has found that under certain conditions such pledges, most commonly called virginity pledges, may help some adolescents delay sexual intercourse. When they work, pledges help this select group of adolescents delay the onset of sexual intercourse for an average of 18 months—far short of marriage. Researchers found that pledges only worked when taken by a small group of students. Pledges taken by a whole class were ineffective. More importantly, the studies also found that those young people who took a pledge were one-third less likely to use contraception when they did become sexually active than their peers who had not pledged. These teens are therefore more vulnerable to the risks of unprotected sexual activity, such as unintended pregnancy and STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Further research has confirmed that although some students who take pledges delay intercourse, ultimately they are just as likely to contract an STD as their non-pledging peers. The study also found that the STD rates were higher in communities where a significant proportion (over 20 percent) of the young people had taken virginity pledges.⁴¹

Another CBAE grantee, Christian Care Center, is involved in several different ministries, including “a Men’s Residence, Women’s Care Center, Emergency Children’s Shelter, long-term Children’s Residential Group Home, Benevolence Ministry, Pregnancy Care Center, Welcome Home Ministry, and Village Thrift Store.”⁴² Christian Care Center states on its website that it has “expanded into other areas including Abstinence Education.”⁴³

Family & Children Faith Coalition, Inc. uses its CBAE grant to conduct the abstinence-only-until-marriage program “Project U-Turn.” Project U-Turn uses *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training*, a popular fear-based curriculum.⁴⁴ SIECUS reviewed *WAIT Training* and found that it contains little medical or biological information and almost no information about STDs, including HIV/AIDS. Instead, it contains information and statistics about marriage, many of which are outdated and not supported by scientific research. It also contains messages of fear and shame and biased views of gender, sexual orientation, and family type. For example, *WAIT Training* explains, “men sexually are like microwaves and women sexually are like crockpots. . . . A woman is stimulated more by touch and romantic words. She is far more attracted by a man’s personality while a man is stimulated by sight. A man is usually less discriminating about those to whom he is physically attracted.”⁴⁵

Pregnancy Care Center of Plant City, Inc. is a crisis pregnancy center (CPC) that states its mission is to “share God’s compassion and provision to those facing unintended pregnancy and to uphold the sanctity of human life.”⁴⁶ Its abstinence-only-until-marriage program is called “iWait.” This program includes the iWait Club, formerly known as the Teen Advisors, which the organization describes as a “leadership/mentoring organization for high school students committed to choosing abstinence until marriage.”⁴⁷ Participants in the iWait Club are required to sign a one-year contract stating that they will commit to “a drug and alcohol-free lifestyle while abstaining from premarital sex.”⁴⁸

Pregnancy Center of Pinellas County (formerly Pinellas Crisis Pregnancy Center) calls its abstinence-only-until-marriage program “More 2 Life.” More 2 Life operates in a middle schools, high schools, private schools, church youth groups, and community centers both during school hours and as an after school program.⁴⁹

More 2 Life’s website contains inaccurate information. For example, in the section under “Teacher Resources,” More 2 Life states “Condoms are not effective in preventing the spread of HPV.”⁵⁰ In truth, according to the CDC, condoms are effective against HPV and cervical cancer. It is true that condoms cannot provide complete protection from HPV, in part because infections may occur on sites not covered by the condom. However, the CDC says, “Laboratory studies have demonstrated that latex condoms provide an essentially impermeable barrier to particles the size of HPV” and that “studies of HPV infection in men demonstrate that most HPV infections are located on parts of the penis that would be covered by a condom.”⁵¹ In addition, according to a University of Washington study published in the *New*

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England Journal of Medicine, consistent condom use can cut a woman’s risk of HPV infection by 70 percent and protect her from developing precancerous cervical changes.⁵²

In addition to inaccurate information, More 2 Life’s website uses fear and shame tactics to encourage young people to remain abstinent. In the “Q & A” section, More 2 Life states that the consequences of sex outside of marriage include “Bad Reputation, Rumors or Gossip, etc.”⁵³

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2007

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Florida Department of Health www.doh.state.fl.us www.greattowait.com	\$2,521,581 federal \$3,500,000 state	Title V
ABST (Abstinence Between Strong Teens) DUAL GRANTEE 2005–2008 www.abstinc.com	\$250,000 \$642,250	Title V sub-grantee CBAE
Catholic Charities, Diocese of Palm Beach, Inc. www.diocesepb.org	\$209,263	Title V sub-grantee
Investing in Our Youth, Inc.	\$227,552	Title V sub-grantee
Project S.O.S. DUAL GRANTEE 2006–2011 www.projectsos.com	\$250,000 \$599,619	Title V sub-grantee CBAE
Putnam County Health Department	\$129,344	Title V sub-grantee
Recapturing the Vision www.recapturingthevision.org	\$94,999.99	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
River Region Human Services, Inc. www.rrhs.org	\$250,000	Title V sub-grantee
Resources for Women, Inc.	\$146,131.23	Title V sub-grantee
Seminole County Healthy Start Coalition, Inc. www.seminolehealthystart.org	\$103,752.40	Title V sub-grantee
Washington County Health Department www.doh.state.fl.us/chdWashington/Default.htm	\$250,000	Title V sub-grantee
A Woman's Place Ministries, Inc. 2005–2008 www.awpm.net	\$782,992	CBAE
Baker County Health Department 2005–2008 www.outspokn.com	\$460,755	CBAE
BETA Center, Inc. 2005–2008 www.betacenter.org	\$430,938	CBAE
Catholic Diocese of Orlando/ThinkSmart, Inc. 2004–2007 www.orlandodiocese.org	\$800,000	CBAE

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Christian Care Center, Inc. 2006–2011 www.christiancarecenter.org	\$423,166	CBAE
Family & Children Faith Care 2007–2011 www.fcfcfl.org www.uturnmiami.org	\$586,307	CBAE
Hendry County Health Department 2005–2008 www.doh.state.fl.us/chd/Hentry/home.html	\$393,067	CBAE
James B. Sanderlin Family Center 2004–2007	\$371,761	CBAE
Osceola County Health Department 2004–2007 www.osceolahealth.org	\$799,791	CBAE
Pinellas Crisis Pregnancy Center (United Students for Abstinence) 2006–2011 www.pregctr.net	\$600,000	CBAE

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Pregnancy Care Center of Plant City, Inc. 2007–2011 www.plantcitypregnancycenter.org	\$599,879	CBAE
Switchboard of Miami 2007–2011 TRIPLE GRANTEE 2002–2007 TRIPLE GRANTEE 2004–2009 www.switchboardmiami.org	\$463,000 \$225,000 \$300,000	CBAE AFLA AFLA
TLC Clinic, Inc. 2005–2008	\$800,000	CBAE
Trinity Church, Inc. 2007–2011 www.trinitychurch.tv	\$599,800	CBAE
Beta Center, Inc. 2002–2007 www.betacenter.org	\$225,000	AFLA
Boys and Girls Clubs of Sarasota County 2002–2007 www.boysandgirlsclub.com	\$225,000	AFLA

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Urban League of Broward County 2002–2007 www.campaignforchange.org	\$99,227	AFLA

Adolescent Health Contact⁵⁴

Shay Chapman
 Florida Department of Health
 Family Health Services
 4025 Esplande Way 105A
 Tallahassee, FL 32399
 Phone: (850) 245-4466

Florida Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Florida
 4500 Biscayne Boulevard, Suite 340
 Miami, FL 33137
 Phone: (786) 363-2700
www.aclufl.org

Florida Association of Planned Parenthood
 Affiliates
 6623 Gateway Ave., Unit A
 Sarasota, FL 34231
 Phone: (941) 923-5500
www.floridaplannedparenthood.org

Florida NOW
 Phone: 1-800-535-2669
www.fnw.org

Florida Women's Consortium
 4335 Elm Ave.
 Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
www.floridawomensconsortium.com

National Women's Political Caucus
 of Florida
 161 S.E. 13th St.
 Pompano Beach, FL 33060
 Phone: (954) 946-3265
www.withoutboundaries.com

Republican Majority for Choice
 P.O. Box 30503
 Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33420
 Phone: (561) 493-8880
www.gopchoice.org

The Healthy Teens Campaign
 6623 Gateway Ave., Unit A
 Sarasota, FL 34231
 Phone: (941) 923-4555
<http://www.healthyteensflorida.org>

National Council of Jewish Women
 Palm Beach Section
<http://www.ncjwpalmbeach.org>

Florida Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Family First
609 West De Leon St.
Tampa, FL 33606
Phone: (813) 222-8300
www.familyfirst.net

Florida Right To Life
378 Center Pointe Circle, Suite 1250
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701
Phone: (407) 834-LIFE
www.frtl.org

Newspapers in Florida⁵⁵

El Nuevo Herald
Newsroom
1 Herald Plz.
Miami, FL 33132
Phone: (305) 376-2183
www.elnuevoherald.com

The Florida Times-Union
Newsroom
P.O. Box 1949
Jacksonville, FL 32231
Phone: (904) 359-4111
www.jacksonville.com

Florida Today
Newsroom
P.O. Box 419000
Melbourne, FL 32941
Phone: (321) 242-3620
www.floridatoday.com

The Ledger
Newsroom
P.O. Box 408
Lakeland, FL 33802
Phone: (863) 802-7209
www.theledger.com

Miami Herald
Newsroom
1 Herald Plz.
Miami, FL 33132
Phone: (305) 376-3557
www.miamiherald.com

Naples Daily News
Newsroom
1075 Central Ave.
Naples, FL 34102
Phone: (239) 262-3161
www.naplesnews.com

The News-Journal
Newsroom
901 6th St.
Daytona Beach, FL 32117
Phone: (386) 252-1511
www.news-journalonline.com

News-Press
Newsroom
2442 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901
Phone: (239) 335-0200
www.news-press.com

Orlando Sentinel
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2833
Orlando, FL 32802
Phone: (407) 420-5000
www.orlandosentinel.com

The Palm Beach Post
Newsroom
P.O. Box 24700
West Palm Beach, FL 33416
Phone: (561) 820-4400
www.palmbeachpost.com

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Pensacola News Journal
Newsroom
101 E. Romana St.
Pensacola, FL 32502
Phone: (850) 435-8500
www.pensacolanejournal.com

St. Petersburg Times
Newsroom
1000 N. Ashley Dr.
Tampa, FL 33602
Phone: (727)893-8111
www.tampabay.com

Sarasota Herald-Tribune
Newsroom
P.O. Box 1719
Sarasota, FL 34230
Phone: (941) 361-4800
www.heraldtribune.com

South Florida Sun-Sentinel
Newsroom
200 E. Las Olas Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
Phone: (954) 356-4000
www.sun-sentinel.com

Tampa Tribune
Newsroom
200 S. Parker St.
Tampa, FL 33606
Phone: (813) 259-8225
www.tampatrib.com

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 2007 begins on October 1, 2006 and ends on September 30, 2007.

² Allyson Bird, "Group Urges AIDS Education in St. Lucie Schools," *Palm Beach Post*, 12 May 2007, accessed 24 May 2007, <www.palmbeachpost.com/search/content/local_news/epaper/2007/05/12/m1b_slsexed_0512.html>.

³ Anthony Westbury, "Testimonials On Need For Sex Ed In Schools Left Lasting Impression," *TCPalm.com* (FL), 30 August 2007, accessed 4 September 2007, <www.tcpalm.com/news/2007/aug/30/30testimonials-on-need-for-sex-ed-in-schools/>.

⁴ "Lawsuit Challenges Attitudes On Gays: The ACLU Supports A Push For A School Gay-Straight Club," *St. Petersburg Times*, 2 January 2007, accessed 4 January 2007, <www.sptimes.com/2007/01/02/State/Lawsuit_challenges_at.shtml>.

⁵ Pete Gawda, "School Board Loses Counsel: Local Board Needs New Counsel To Handle ACLU Suit," *Okeechobee News*, 1 December 2006, accessed 5 December 2006, <www.newszap.com/articles/2006/12/01/fl/lake_okeechobee/aok01.txt>.

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⁹ Kate Brennan, "Ban Abstinence-Only Group, Parents Say," *Florida Today*, 15 June 2007, accessed 18 June 2007, <www.floridatoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070615/NEWS01/706150353/1006>.

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¹² Kate Brennan, "Board Weighs Sex Ed Strategy," *Florida Today*, 8 August 2007, accessed 9 August 2007, <www.floridatoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070808/NEWS01/708080382/1006>.

¹³ Christina DeNardo, "Sex Ed Improvements Go Slowly At District," *Palm Beach Post*, 15 July 2007, accessed 20 July 2007, <www.palmbeachpost.com/localnews/content/local_news/epaper/2007/07/15/s1c_sksexed_0715.html>.

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- ¹⁷ Marilyn Brown, "Board Leader Solicits Supporters For Change In School Clubs Rule," *The Tampa Tribune*, 12 December 2006, accessed 14 December 2006, <www.tbo.com/news/metro/MGB58L9TLVE.html>
- ¹⁸ Christina DeNardo, "District's Uneven Blocking of Web Sites Draws Criticism," *Palm Beach Post*, 9 May 2006, accessed 16 May 2006, <www.palmbeachpost.com/pbcentral/content/local_news/epaper/2006/05/09/s1b_skWEB_0509.html>.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Joe Delloso, "Gay/Lesbian Websites Blocked by the School District of Palm Beach County," *InletSpin.com*, 4 May 2006, accessed 16 May 2006, <www.inletspin.com/text/11.htm>.
- ²¹ American Psychiatric Association, "Position Statement on Psychiatric Treatment and Sexual Orientation," released 11 September 1998, accessed 19 August 2005, <www.psych.org>.
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- ²³ "School District Begins Unblocking Some LGBT Web Sites," *365Gay.com*, 16 December 2006, accessed 18 December 2006, <www.365gay.com/Newscon06/12/121506palm.htm>.
- ²⁴ Nicol Jenkins, "Palm Beach School District Unblocks Access to Gay Supportive Websites," *Boca Raton News*, 21 December 2006, accessed 2 January 2006, <<http://www.bocaratonnews.com/index.php?src=news&prid=18237&category=Local%20News>>.
- ²⁵ Evan Bacon, "Teacher Suspended: Showed Kids Abortion Film," *CBS4*, 27 October 2006, accessed 31 October 2006, <http://cbs4.com/local/local_story_300033109.html>.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from: Danice K. Eaton, et. al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007," Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 57.SS-4 (6 June 2008), accessed 4 June 2008, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.
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- ³⁴ "Our History," Abstinence Between Strong Teens International, Inc., accessed 1 April 2008, <<http://www.abstinc.com>>.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
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- ⁴⁰ "Catalog: Abstinence 'Til Marriage (ATM) Pledge Cards," Club Varsity, (2001-2003), accessed 21 March 2008, <<http://www.clubvarsity.org/goldcard.shtml>>.
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- ⁴² "Home," Christian Care Center, accessed 1 April 2008, <<http://www.christiancarecenter.org>>.
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- ⁴⁴ "Current Programs: Prevention Education," Family & Children Faith Coalition, (2002-2006), accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://fcfcfl.org/v5/Current-Programs-All.html#ProjectUTurn>>.
- ⁴⁵ Joneen Krauth-Mackenzie, *WAIT (Why Am I Tempted) Training, Second Edition* (Greenwood Village, CO: WAIT Training, undated). For more information, see SIECUS' review of *WAIT Training* at <http://www.communityactionkit.org/curricula_reviews.html>.
- ⁴⁶ "Home," Pregnancy Care Center of Plant City, (2003-2006), accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.plantcitypregnancycenter.org>>.
- ⁴⁷ "What is the iWait. Club?," iWait. (2008), accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.askmewhiwait.com>>.
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- ⁵⁰ "Teacher Resources: STD Info," More 2 Life, accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.m2l.org>>.

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⁵² Rachel Winer, Ph.D., "Condom Use and the Risk of Genital Human Papillomavirus Infection in Young Women," *New England Journal of Medicine* 354, 25 (2006): 2645-2654.

⁵³ "Knowledge is Power: Q & A," More 2 Life, accessed 12 March 2008, <<http://www.m2l.org>>.

⁵⁴ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

⁵⁵ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means inclusive and does not contain the local level newspapers which are integral to getting your message out to your community.

SIECUS strongly urge you to follow stories about the issues that concern you on the national, state, and local level by using an internet news alert service such as Google alerts, becoming an avid reader of your local papers, and establishing relationships with reporters who cover your issues. For more information on how to achieve your media goals visit the SIECUS Community Action Kit.