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Iowa Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Iowa law mandates that research-based, age-appropriate health education be taught in kindergarten through 12th grade, and details what must be included by grade. In first through sixth grade, “the health curriculum shall include the characteristics of communicable diseases including acquired immune deficiency syndrome [AIDS].”¹ In seventh and eighth grade, health education must “include the characteristics of sexually transmitted disease and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.”² In ninth through 12th grade, students are required to take one unit of health instruction, which must include information on “the prevention and control of disease, including sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and acquired immune deficiency syndrome.”³ Additionally, health curricula must include information about Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and the HPV vaccine.

Iowa law mandates that the curriculum use materials that are up-to-date, age-appropriate, and research-based/medically accurate; furthermore, all information must be free of biases based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender.⁴ School districts may teach age-appropriate, science-based, comprehensive sexuality education as part of the health curriculum, but may also use abstinence-only materials so long as those materials fall within the parameters of the law.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of health education courses if the course conflicts with the student’s religious beliefs. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Iowa Code §§ 279.50 and 256.11, and Iowa Administrative Code § 281-12.5.

Recent Legislation

Bill Mandates Comprehensive Sexuality Education

House File 2269, introduced in February 2010, would have expanded the current educational standards to include age-appropriate, comprehensive sexuality education in all grades from kindergarten through grade 12. Instruction on HIV/AIDS would have begun in grade one, and STDs would be included from grades seven through 12. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Education and died after it failed to move out of committee.

Iowa’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁵

- In 2007, 44% of female high school students and 43% of male high school students in Iowa 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 4% of male high school students in Iowa 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, 13% of female high school students and 13% of male high school students in Iowa 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 32% of male high school students in Iowa 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 74% of males in Iowa 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, 24% of females and 23% of males in Iowa 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 20% of males in Iowa 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 Iowa reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Iowa Youth Sexual Health Statistics

Teen Pregnancy, Birth, and Abortion

- Iowa's teen pregnancy rate ranks 41st in the U.S., with a rate of 51 pregnancies per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 70 pregnancies per 1,000.⁶ There were a total of 5,200 pregnancies among young women ages 15–19 reported in 2005, the most recent year for which data are available, in Iowa.⁷
- Iowa's teen birth rate ranked 36th in the U.S. in 2005, with a rate of 32.6 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 40.5 births per 1,000.⁸ In 2005, there were a total of 3,330 live births reported to young women ages 15–19 in Iowa.⁹
- In 2006, the U.S. teen birth rate increased for the first time in 15 years by 3% from 40.5 to 41.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19, after having steadily declined between 1991 and 2005.¹⁰ Iowa's teen birth rate also increased between 2005 and 2006, from 32.6 to 32.9 births per 1,000 young women ages 15–19.¹¹
- Iowa's teen abortion rate ranks 26th in the U.S., with a rate of 12 abortions per 1,000 young women ages 15–19 compared to the national rate of 19 abortions per 1,000. In 2005, there were a total of 1,187 abortions reported among young women ages 15–19 in Iowa.¹²

HIV and AIDS

- Iowa ranks 34th in cases of HIV infection diagnosed in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 82 new cases of HIV infection diagnosed in Iowa.¹³
- Iowa ranks 28th in cases of HIV/AIDS diagnosed among young people ages 13–19 out of the 34 states with confidential, name-based HIV infection reporting. In 2007, there were a total of 2 young people ages 13–19 diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Iowa.¹⁴
- Iowa’s AIDS rate ranks 46th in the U.S., with a rate of 2.5 cases per 100,000 population compared to the national rate of 12.5 cases per 100,000.¹⁵
- Iowa ranks 39th in number of reported AIDS cases in the U.S. among all age groups. In 2007, there were a total of 76 new AIDS cases reported in Iowa.¹⁶
- In 2007, there were no AIDS cases reported among young people ages 13–19 in Iowa.¹⁷

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

- Iowa ranks 37th in reported cases of Chlamydia among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 14.51 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 19.51 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 3,155 cases of Chlamydia reported among young people ages 15–19 in Iowa.¹⁸
- Iowa ranks 31st in reported cases of gonorrhea among young people ages 15–19 in the U.S., with an infection rate of 2.25 cases per 1,000 compared to the national rate of 4.52 cases per 1,000. In 2008, there were a total of 490 cases of gonorrhea reported among young people ages 15–19 in Iowa.¹⁹
- In 2008, there were no cases of primary or secondary syphilis reported among young people ages 15–19 in Iowa.²⁰

Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Education

SIECUS is not aware of any examples of model programs, policies, or best practices being implemented in Iowa public schools that provide a more comprehensive approach to sex education for young people.

We encourage you to submit any updated or additional information on comprehensive approaches to sex education being implemented in Iowa public schools for inclusion in future publications of the SIECUS State Profiles. Please visit SIECUS’ “Contact Us” webpage at www.siecus.org to share information. Select “state policy” as the subject heading.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

Community-based organizations in Iowa received \$1,200,000 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2009.²¹

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until Marriage Funding

- Iowa chose not to participate in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program in Fiscal Year 2009. The state was eligible for approximately \$238,648 in funding. Due to the expiration of the grant program on June 30, 2009, three months prior to the end of the federal fiscal year, the state would have received three quarters of the total funding allocated for the full fiscal year.

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) Funding

- Organizations in Iowa received \$1,200,000 in CBAE funding for Fiscal Year 2009.

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- There are two CBAE grantees in Iowa, including one community-based organization and one faith-based organization.

Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Funding

- There are no AFLA grantees in Iowa.

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Curricula Used by Grantees

Some abstinence-only-until-marriage grantees in Iowa use commercially available curricula. These include, but are not limited to:

- *A.C. Green’s Game Plan*
- *Choosing the Best*
- *Navigator*

To read reviews of abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula commonly used by federal grantees please visit the “Curricula and Speaker Reviews” webpage of SIECUS’ Community Action Kit at www.communityactionkit.org.

Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2009²²

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee	Title V	CBAE (Length of Grant)	AFLA (Length of Grant)
Bethany Christian Services of Northwest Iowa www.bethany.org/nwiowa		\$600,000 (2007–2012)	
Sexual Health Education, Inc. (d.b.a. Equipping Youth) www.equippingyouth.org		\$600,000 (2007–2012)	

Adolescent Health Contact²³

Lindsay Miller
 Iowa Department of Public Health
 Division of Planning and Administration
 Lucas State Office Building
 321 E. 12th Street
 Des Moines, IA 50319
 Phone: (515) 281-7721

Iowa Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Family Planning Council of Iowa
108 3rd Street, Suite 220
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 288-9028
www.fpcouncil.com

Iowa National Organization for Women
P.O. Box 41114
Des Moines, IA 50311
www.iowanow.org

FutureNet, The Iowa Network for
Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention,
Parenting, and Sexual Health
3839 Merle Hay Road, Suite 275
Des Moines, IA 50310
Phone: (515) 276-6788
www.iowafuturenet.org

Planned Parenthood of Greater Iowa
1171 7th Street
Des Moines, IA 50314
Phone: (515) 280-7004
www.ppgi.org

Family Planning Council of Iowa
108 3rd Street, Suite 220
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 288-9028
www.fpcouncil.com

Planned Parenthood of East Central Iowa
3425 1st Avenue, SW, Suite 100
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402
Phone: (319) 363-8572
www.plannedparenthood.org/ppeci

Planned Parenthood of Southeast Iowa
620 N. 8th Street
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone: (319) 753-6209
www.plannedparenthood.org/ppsi

The Project
711 East 2nd Street
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 284-0245
www.aidsprojectci.org

Iowa Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Iowa Christian Alliance
939 Office Park Road, Suite 115
West Des Moines, IA 50265
Phone: (515) 225-1515
www.iowachristian.com

Iowa Family Policy Center
1100 North Hickory Boulevard, Suite 107
Pleasant Hill, IA 50327
Phone: (515) 263-3495
www.iowaprofamily.org

Iowa Right to Life Committee
1500 Illinois Street
Des Moines, IA 50314
Phone: (515) 244-1012
www.irlc.org

Newspapers in Iowa²⁴

Courier

Newsroom
501 Commercial Street
Waterloo, IA 50701
Phone: (800)798-1741
www.wfcourier.com

Des Moines Register

Newsroom
715 Locust Street
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 284-8590
www.desmoinesregister.com

Globe-Gazette

Newsroom
300 N. Washington Avenue
Mason City, IA 50401
Phone: (641) 421-0500
www.globegazette.com

The Messenger

Newsroom
713 Central Avenue
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
Phone: (515) 573-2141
www.messengernews.net

The Sioux City Journal

Newsroom
515 Pavonia Street
Sioux City, IA 51101
Phone: (712) 293-4210
www.siouxcityjournal.com

The Daily Nonpareil

Newsroom
535 W. Broadway
Council Bluffs, IA 51503
Phone: (712) 328-1811
www.nonpareionline.com

The Gazette

Newsroom
500 3rd Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Phone: (319) 398-8254
www.gazetteonline.com

The Hawk Eye

Newsroom
800 S. Main Street
Burlington, IA 52601
Phone: (319) 754-8461
www.thehawkeye.com

Quad-City Times

Newsroom
500 E. 3rd Street
Davenport, IA 52801
Phone: (563) 383-2244
www.qctimes.com

Telegraph Herald

Newsroom
801 Bluff Street
Dubuque, IA 52001
Phone: (563) 588-5611
www.thonline.com

Political Blogs in Iowa

Blog for Iowa

www.blogforiowa.com

The Iowa Independent

www.iowaindependent.com/category/blog

Bleeding Heartland

www.bleedingheartland.com

Iowa Liberal

www.iowaliberal.com/

- ¹ Iowa Code § 256.11(3) <<http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=IowaCode&ga=83>>
- ² Iowa Code § 256.11(4) <<http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=IowaCode&ga=83>>
- ³ Iowa Code § 256.11(5)(j), <<http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=IowaCode&ga=83>>
- ⁴ Iowa Code § 279.50(9)(d)(2).
- ⁵ 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>>. Note: Iowa did not participate in the 2009 YRBS.
- ⁶ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, (Washington, DC: Guttmacher Institute, January 2010), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPtrends.pdf>>, Table 3.1.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, Table 3.2.
- ⁸ Joyce A. Martin, et. al., “Births: Final Data for 2006,” *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 57, number 7 (Hyattsville, MD: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 7 January 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_07.pdf>, Table B.
- ⁹ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Table 3.2.
- ¹⁰ Martin, et. al., “Births: Final Data for 2006,” 4.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, Table B.
- ¹² U.S. *Teenage Pregnancies, Births, and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity*, Table 3.5.
- ¹³ “Cases of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States and Dependent Areas, 2007,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report*, vol. 19, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, February 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/2007report/pdf/2007SurveillanceReport.pdf>>, Table 18.
- ¹⁴ Slide 6: “Estimated Numbers of HIV/AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—34 States,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*; “AIDS Case Rate per 100,000 Population, All Ages, 2007,” (Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparatable.jsp?ind=513&cat=11&sub=120&yr=62&typ=1&sort=a>>.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Table 16.
- ¹⁷ Slide 15: “Reported AIDS Cases among Adolescents 13 to 19 Years of Age, 2007—United States and Dependent Areas,” *HIV/AIDS Surveillance in Adolescents and Young Adults (through 2007)*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2009), accessed 25 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/slides/adolescents/index.htm>>.
- ¹⁸ “Wonder Database: Selected STDs by Age, Race/Ethnicity, and Gender, 1996-2008 Results,” (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), 30 June 2009, accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://wonder.cdc.gov>>; see also Table 10: “Chlamydia: Reported Cases and Rates Per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, (Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of STD Prevention, November 2009), accessed 5 March 2010, <<http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats08/surv2008-Complete.pdf>>, 95.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*; see also Table 20: “Gonorrhea—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 106.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*; see also Table 33: “Primary and Secondary Syphilis—Reported Cases and Rates per 100,000 Population by Age Group and Sex: United States, 2004–2008,” *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, 121.
- ²¹ This refers to the federal government’s fiscal year, which begins on October 1st and ends on September 30th. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2009 began on October 1, 2008 and ended on September 30, 2009.
- ²² Through the Fiscal Year 2010 appropriations process, Congress eliminated all discretionary funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, including the entire CBAE program and the abstinence-only-until-marriage portion of AFLA. The grant years listed in the chart reflect the years for which funding was originally approved; however, the grants effectively ended in Fiscal Year 2009.
- ²³ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.
- ²⁴ This section is a list of major newspapers in your state with contact information for their newsrooms. This list is by no means exhaustive and does not contain the local level newspapers which are integral to getting your message out to your community. SIECUS strongly urges 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](#).