



## MAINE

*Maine received \$664,000 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.<sup>1</sup>*

### Maine Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Maine's sexuality education law is one of the most comprehensive in the country; it mandates that the state "undertake initiatives to implement effective, comprehensive family life education services." The state must provide:

- training for teachers, parents, and community members;
- forums among youth and community members in communities with a high need for sexuality education;
- staff to provide trainings, develop curricula, and evaluate the program;
- funding for issue management and policy development training for school boards, superintendents, principals, and administrators; and
- funding for programs that have shown outstanding work around sexuality education.

"Comprehensive family life education" must be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The information provided must be medically accurate and age-appropriate, and must respect community values and encourage parent-child communication. Programs must teach about abstinence, healthy relationships, contraception, and conflict resolution. No specific curriculum is mandated.

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

See Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, Chapter 406, Sections 1902, 1910 and 1911.

### Recent Legislation

SIECUS is not aware of any proposed legislation regarding sexuality education in Maine.

### Events of Note

*Superintendent Back-Peddles on Book Ban*

*February 2006; Orono, ME*

The Orono School District Superintendent decided to reinstate *Girl, Interrupted*, an autobiographical account of author Susanna Kaysen's experience in a psychiatric hospital, into the curriculum. The superintendent had removed the book from a freshman classroom after a parent complained about

the book's sexual and violent content. The book was then reviewed by Orono High School's principal, librarian, and other community members who deemed it appropriate for students.

Kaysen said she felt her story was informative for high school students and did not approve of the censorship, stating, "Who is anybody to decide what is appropriate to read? It's insane."<sup>2</sup> Seeing the controversy in a positive light, however, she added, "They give credit to the idea of the power of books, which most people in today's society don't believe in anymore."<sup>3</sup>

*Portland Assesses Sexuality Education Programs  
January 2006; Portland, ME*

After six years of debate, Portland's sexuality education program may undergo budget cuts, much to the dismay of advocates and community members.

The comprehensive sexual health program has a full-time staff of three sexuality educators who perform outreach to grades four through twelve. Citing budgetary problems in the city, the school district's superintendent proposed that a task force review the program and look for less expensive ways to educate in schools.

Supporters of the program, however, believe that it is unique and has contributed to the decline in the teenage pregnancy rate in Maine. A spokesman from Planned Parenthood of Northern New England commented, "We need to cherish and hold on to it and promote it so that other school districts model what Portland is doing."<sup>4</sup> One of the sexuality educators responsible for providing the program said that she was prepared to fight the budget cuts and wished to join the superintendent's task force.

*Maine Rejects Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funds  
September 2005; Augusta, ME*

On September 20, 2005, Maine officials announced their decision to reject Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding. With this action, Maine joined California in refusing to take ideologically biased federal abstinence-only-until-marriage funding.

Advocates of comprehensive strategies hailed this decision. Nicole Clegg, director of public affairs for the Family Planning Association of Maine said, "We thank Maine's Health and Human Services' Public Health Department for having the courage to refuse these funds and putting the wellbeing of our young people ahead of a political agenda."

In Fiscal Year 2004, Maine received \$172,468 in federal Title V funding and used it to run a media campaign titled *Parents Matter*, which focused on reaching parents through statistics, talking points, and multimedia resources.<sup>5</sup>

In rejecting Title V funding, Dr. Dora Anne Mills, the state's public health director, stated that tighter federal control of the funding and its growing inconsistency with state law made it difficult for Maine to continue its more inclusive media campaign. The state had already decided that, due to Maine law, which mandates a comprehensive approach to sexuality education, abstinence-only-until-marriage funding could not be used in schools. Dr. Mills worried that the increased stringency would cause Maine to violate its law mandating comprehensive sexuality education in schools. Dr. Mills also worried that this funding would not allow the state to help sexually active young people or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth.<sup>6</sup>

Earlier in September 2005, the Maine Department of Education sent a letter to all school superintendents stating that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs do not fulfill the requirements of Maine law.<sup>7</sup> At the time, Dr. Mills referred to abstinence-only-until-marriage funding as "ideological money" and said that "studies show over and over again when youth are given full information, including abstinence, they make the healthiest choices possible."<sup>8</sup>

## Maine's Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>9</sup>

- In 2005, 46% of female high school students and 43% of male high school students in Maine reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 3% of female high school students and 6% of male high school students in Maine reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 11% of female high school students and 13% of male high school students in Maine reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 37% of female high school students and 30% of male high school students in Maine reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 55% of females and 64% of males in Maine reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 41% of females and 26% of males in Maine reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 21% of females and 32% of males in Maine reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 91% of high school students in Maine reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, Maine's abortion rate was 15 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2004, Maine's birth rate was 24 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>11</sup>

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

Maine would have been eligible for \$161,398 in Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in Fiscal Year 2006; however, the state does not apply for these funds due to the extraordinary restrictions upon how the money must be spent. Therefore, the state does not match funds nor does it have organizations supported by this type of federal money.

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

There is one CBAE grantee in Maine: Heritage of Maine (now called Maine Character Resource). There is one AFLA grantee in Maine: People's Regional Opportunity Program.

Maine Character Resource (formerly Heritage of Maine and Character Counts of Maine) is an organization that provides “character-based health programs that empower families to preserve their teens’ sexual health through knowledge, skills, and success.”<sup>12</sup> MCR utilizes the *Heritage Keepers Abstinence Education I* curriculum, claiming that topics of human sexuality, STIs and STDs, contraception, risk avoidance, decision making, negotiation skills, and the benefits of marriage are “covered in medically accurate and culturally-relevant terms.”<sup>13</sup> SIECUS reviewed *Heritage Keepers* and found that it contains very little information about important topics in human sexuality, such as puberty, anatomy, and sexual behavior. Even topics that are frequently discussed in detail in other abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, such as condoms and STDs, receive very little mention. Instead, the curriculum devotes most of its lessons to the importance of marriage and abstinence before marriage. It relies on messages of fear and shame, and promotes biased views of gender, marriage, and pregnancy options.<sup>14</sup>

The curriculum includes a virginity pledge that students are asked to sign on the last day:

The time has come for you to decide what you are going to do about abstaining from sexual activity outside of marriage...Now is the time for you to make the commitment for the very best for yourself, to wait for the commitment of marriage to have sex...Make this commitment for yourself, for those you love and the ONE you marry.<sup>15</sup>

Research has found that under certain conditions these 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%) of the young people had taken virginity pledges.<sup>16</sup>

In 2005, the state of Maine refused to allow MCR (then Heritage of Maine) to hold its programs in Maine schools because its curricula do not meet the comprehensive health education requirements for the state.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, MCR’s website encourages parents, community groups, and schools to invite the organization in. Its website informs visitors that “because our services are funded by grant resources there is no cost to your school or agency” and suggests that interested individuals “coordinate with other parents and co-sign a letter of request asking to bring Heritage Keepers’ authentic abstinence program to your school.”<sup>18</sup>

M A I N E

**Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2006**

<b>Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee</b>  <b>Length of Grant</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)</b>
Heritage of Maine (Maine Character Resource)  2004–2007  <a href="http://www.heritageofmaine.org">www.heritageofmaine.org</a>  <a href="http://www.mainecharacterresource.org/">http://www.mainecharacterresource.org/</a>	\$499,000	CBAE
People’s Regional Opportunity Program  2003–2008  <a href="http://www.propeople.org">www.propeople.org</a>	\$165,000	AFLA

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

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 Bureau of Health, Department of Human Services  
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 Augusta, ME 04333  
 Phone: (207) 287-5361

**Maine Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

Family Planning Association of Maine P.O. Box 587 Augusta, ME 04332 Phone: (207) 662-7524 <a href="http://www.mainefamilyplanning.org">www.mainefamilyplanning.org</a>	Maine Civil Liberties Union 401 Cumberland Ave. Portland, ME 04101 Phone: (207) 774-5444 <a href="http://www.mclu.org">www.mclu.org</a>
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Planned Parenthood of Northern New England  
 183 Talcott Rd., Suite 101  
 Williston, VT 05495  
 Phone: 1-800-287-8188  
[www.ppnne.org](http://www.ppnne.org)

## Maine Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Christian Civic League of Maine  
70 Sewall St.  
Augusta, ME 04330  
Phone: (207) 622-7634  
[www.cclmaine.org](http://www.cclmaine.org)

## Newspapers in Maine

*Bangor Daily News*  
Julie Harris  
Managing Editor  
P.O. Box 1329  
Bangor, ME 04402  
Phone: (207) 990-8285

*Journal Tribune*  
Nick Cowenhoven  
City Editor  
457 Alfred Rd.  
Biddeford, ME 04005  
Phone: (207) 282-1535

*The Portland Phoenix*  
Education Editor/ Reporter  
16 York St.  
Portland, ME 04101  
Phone: (207) 773-8900

*Portland Press Herald*  
John Porter  
Editorial Page Editor  
P.O. Box 1460  
Portland, ME 04104  
Phone: (207) 791-6480

*Sun Journal*  
Lindsay Tice  
Education Reporter  
104 Park St.  
Lewiston, ME 04240  
Phone: (207) 689-2852

*Kennebec Journal*  
April Paul  
Education Reporter  
274 Western Ave.  
Augusta, ME 04330  
Phone: (207) 861-9256

*Morning Sentinel*  
Joe Ronkin  
City Editor  
31 Front St.  
Waterville, ME 04901  
Phone: (207) 621-5645

*Portland Press Herald*  
Josie Huang  
Health & Medicine Reporter  
390 Congress St.  
Portland, ME 04101  
Phone: (207) 791-6364

*Portland Press Herald*  
Beth Quimby  
Education Reporter  
390 Congress St.  
Portland, ME 04101  
Phone: (207) 791-6363

*Sun Journal*  
Christopher Williams  
Medical/Health Reporter  
104 Park St.  
Lewiston, ME 04240  
Phone: (207) 689-2803

*The Times Record*  
 Elizabeth Lardie  
 Community Editor  
 3 Business Pkwy.  
 Brunswick, ME 04011  
 Phone: (207) 504-8237

<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 2006 begins on October 1, 2005 and ends on September 30, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> “Author: ‘I Think It is an Honor to Have my Book Banned,’” *Bangor Daily News*, 14 February 2006, accessed 17 Friday 2006, <<http://www.bangornews.com/news/templates/?a=129075&z=500>>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Beth Quimby, “Portland’s Sex Ed Program Up for Review,” *Portland Press Herald*, 9 January 2006, accessed 13 January 2006, <<http://pressherald.mainetoday.com/news/local/060109portland.shtml#top>>.

<sup>5</sup> *Commercials*, Parents Matter, 9 January 2005, accessed 10 April 2006, <<http://www.parentsmatter.org/commercials.html>>.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Carrier, “Abstinence Message Too Weak, Official Says,” *Portland Press Herald*, 3 October 2005, accessed 12 October 2005, <<http://pressherald.mainetoday.com/news/state/051003abstinence.shtml>>.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Peters, “Maine schools shun \$500,000 sex-ed course,” *Portland Press Herald*, 6 September 2005, accessed on Lexis Nexis, 10 April 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from Danice K. Eaton, et al., “Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005,” *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

<sup>10</sup> *U.S. Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: The Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2006/09/12/USTPstats.pdf>>.

<sup>11</sup> *National Vital Statistics Reports 55.01* (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2006), 10, accessed 26 January 2006, <[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr55\\_01.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr55/nvsr55_01.pdf)>.

<sup>12</sup> “About Us,” Maine Character Resource, (2007), accessed 4 April 2007, <<http://mainecharacterresource.org/aboutus.aspx>>.

<sup>13</sup> “What We Teach,” Maine Character Resource, (2007), accessed 4 April 2007, <<http://mainecharacterresource.org/whatweteachP.aspx>>.

<sup>14</sup> Anne Badgley and Carrie Musselman, *Heritage Keepers Student Manual* (Charleston, SC: Heritage Community Services, 1999). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *Heritage Keepers* at <<http://www.communityactionkit.org/reviews/HeritageKeepers.html>>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner, “Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and the Transition to First Intercourse,” *American Journal of Sociology* 106.4 (2001): 859-912; Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner, “After the Promise: The STD Consequences of Adolescent Virginity Pledges,” *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36.4 (2005): 271-278.

<sup>17</sup> Zach Anchors, “Teaching students about ‘character’—Abstinence Education Offered in Addition to SMS Health Curriculum,” *Scarborough Leader*, 2 March 2007, accessed 4 April 2007, <<http://blog.scarboroughleader.com/2007/02/02/teaching-students-about-character--abstinence-education-offered-in-addition-to-sms-health-curriculum.aspx>>.

<sup>18</sup> “For Community Groups,” Maine Character Resource, (2007), accessed 10 April 2007, <<http://www.mainecharacterresource.org/toolsforcommunitysupport.aspx>>.