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State Profile

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The Department of Health and community-based organizations in Massachusetts received \$1,522,067 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

Massachusetts Sexuality Education Law and Policy

Massachusetts does not require sexuality education and instead allows local school boards to make such decisions. In 1990, the Massachusetts Board of Education approved a policy that:

[U]rges local school districts to create programs which make instruction about AIDS/HIV available to every Massachusetts student at every grade level. These programs should be developed in a manner which respects local control over education and involves parents and representatives of the community. The Board believes that AIDS/HIV prevention education is most effective when integrated into a comprehensive health education and human services program.

In addition, the *Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Framework* suggests curricula for schools.

If a community decides to implement sexuality education, it must develop standards with the guidance of community stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, counseling professionals, health professionals, representatives of local religious groups, and representatives of local social service and health agencies. In addition, the program must be taught in kindergarten through twelfth grade; must discuss HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy, family violence, sound health practices; and must “define sexual orientation using the correct terminology (such as heterosexual and gay and lesbian).”

The school district must also ensure that parents and/or guardians receive notification about the sexuality education policy. Parents may remove their children from any or all of this instruction. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See General Laws of Massachusetts, Title XII, Chapter 69 Section 1L, Chapter 71, Section 1, Section 32A, and Section 38O; and *Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Framework*.

Recent Legislation

Legislation to Ban Funding for Abstinence Programs

House Bill 1172, introduced in January 2007, would ban any state agency or political subdivision of Massachusetts from applying for Title V or any other federal grant for abstinence-only education programs. The bill was discharged from the Joint Committee on Higher Education and was sent to the Joint Committee on Public Health on March 12, 2007.

Bill to Require Parental Consent for Sex Education

House Bill 521, introduced in January 2007, would require students to have written parental/guardian consent before participating in public-school sex education. This is known as an opt-in policy. The bill also asserts that no public school teacher or employee who feels that the curriculum violates his or her religious beliefs shall be required to be involved. The bill was sent to the Joint Committee on Higher Education; it was heard on May 29, 2007 and is eligible for executive session.

Events of Note

SIECUS is not aware of any recent events regarding sexuality education in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts's Youth: Statistical Information of Note²

- In 2007, 44% of female high school students and 45% of male high school students in Massachusetts reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 50% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2004, 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students in Massachusetts 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, 11% of female high school students and 14% of male high school students in Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts 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 63% of males in Massachusetts 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, 25% of females and 13% of males in Massachusetts 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 28% of males in Massachusetts 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, 89% of high school students in Massachusetts reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 90% of high school students nationwide.

Boston, Massachusetts

- In 2007, 49% of female high school students and 64% of male high school students in Boston, Massachusetts 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 20% of male high school students in Boston, Massachusetts 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, 11% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students in Boston, Massachusetts 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 43% of male high school students in Boston, Massachusetts 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 74% of males in Boston, Massachusetts reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 55% of females and 69% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 16% of females and 10% of males in Boston, Massachusetts reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.³
- In 2007, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 16% of females and 26% of males in Boston, Massachusetts 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, 77% of high school students in Boston, Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts Department of Public Health received \$712,241 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 Massachusetts, the match was provided through both direct state funds and in-kind services at the Department of Public Health. In addition, one of the grantees provided part of the required match.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health distributed Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funds to two sub-grantees: Geovision, Inc. and A Woman’s Concern. The Geovision, Inc. sub-grantee specializes in media campaigns utilizing multi-lingual formats.⁴ (See the CBAE and AFLA section for more information on A Woman’s Concern.)

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding Status

In October 2007, Massachusetts decided no longer to participate in the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program. In rejecting the funding, Governor Deval Patrick’s administration cited the Mathematica study commissioned by Congress which found that students who participate in abstinence-only-until-marriage programs are just as likely to engage in sexual activity as their peers. The decision goes into effect for Fiscal Year 2008.

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

There is one CBAE grantee in Massachusetts: A Woman’s Concern. There is one AFLA grantee in Massachusetts: Boston Medical Center.

A Woman’s Concern runs several crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs). 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.

In 2006, the former medical director of A Woman’s Concern, Eric Keroack, was appointed to the Office of Population Affairs in Health and Human Services as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Population Affairs in 2006. This appointment put Dr. Keroack in charge of \$283 million in annual family-planning grants that are “designed to provide access to contraceptive supplies and information.”⁵ However, under Dr. Keroack’s leadership, A Woman’s Concern did not believe that women should have access to birth control. It stated that “the crass commercialization and distribution of birth control is demeaning to women, degrading of human sexuality and adverse to human health and happiness.”⁶ In April 2007, Dr. Keroack resigned from his position at the Office of Population Affairs following notification by the Massachusetts Medicaid office that it had launched an investigation into Keroack’s private practice.⁷ The Board of Registration in Medicine also issued warnings to Keroack based on a complaint that he had overmedicated a patient, prescribing her powerful psychotherapeutic drugs, and had “brainwashed” the patient into believing she was “severely depressed.”

A Woman’s Concern runs an abstinence-only-until-marriage program called “Healthy Futures.” The Healthy Futures program has two curricula—one for sixth grade students and one for students in grade 7–12.⁸ The curricula are designed to be presented in 50-minute classroom periods over five consecutive days. In addition, Healthy Futures has a Peer Education Program and offers parent education programs through schools either in conjunction with a student classroom presentation or separately.⁹

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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)
Massachusetts Department of Public Health www.mass.gov/dph	\$712,241 federal \$534,181 state	Title V
A Woman's Concern DUAL GRANTEE 2006–2011 www.awomansconcern.org	\$500,000 \$600,000	Title V sub-grantee CBAE
Geovision, Inc. www.geovisiononline.com	\$50,000	Title V sub-grantee
Boston Medical Center 2004–2009 www.bmc.org	\$209,826	AFLA

Adolescent Health Contact¹⁰

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250 Washington St.
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 624-5905

Massachusetts Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of Massachusetts
211 Congress St., 3rd Floor
Boston, MA 02110
Phone: (617) 482-3170
www.aclu-mass.org

AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts
294 Washington St., 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 437-6200
www.aac.org

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Greater Boston National Organization for Women
1105 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
Phone: (617) 254-9130
www.bostonnow.org

Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy
105 Chauncy St., 8th Floor
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 482-9122
www.massteenpregnancy.org

Massachusetts Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus
P.O. Box 246, State House
Boston, MA 02133
Phone: (617) 248-0776
www.mglpc.org

NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts
15 Court Square, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02108
Phone: (617) 556-8800
www.prochoicemass.org

Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts
1055 Commonwealth Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
Phone: (617) 616-1660
www.plannedparenthood.org/ma

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Massachusetts
P.O. Box 1129
Brookline, MA 02446
Phone: (617) 522-2964
www.rcrcofma.org

Massachusetts Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Massachusetts Family Institute
100 Sylvan Rd., Suite 625
Woburn, MA 01801
Phone: (781) 569-0400
www.mafamily.org

Operation Rescue: Boston
P.O. Box 870037
Milton Village, MA 02187
Phone: (781) 849-6026
www.orboston.org

Massachusetts Citizens for Life
The Schrafft Center
529 Main St.
Boston, MA 02129
Phone: (617) 242-4199
www.masscitizensforlife.org

Newspapers in Massachusetts¹¹

Boston Globe
Newsroom
135 Morrissey Blvd
Boston, MA, 02125
Phone: (617) 929-2000
www.boston.com

Boston Herald
Newsroom
One Herald Square
Boston, MA 02118
Phone: (617) 426-3000
www.bostonherald.com

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Boston Metro
Newsroom
320 Congress Street
5th Floor
Boston, MA 02210
Phone: (617)-210-7905
www.metrobostonnews.com

The Boston Phoenix
Newsroom
126 Brookline Ave.
Boston, MA 02215
Phone: (617)-536-5390
www.thephoenix.com

Cape Cod Times
Newsroom
319 Main St.
Hyannis, MA, 02601
Phone: (508) 775-1200
www.capecodonline.com

The Eagle-Tribune
Newsroom
100 Turnpike Street
North Andover, MA 01845
Phone: (978) 946-2000
www.eagletribune.com

MetroWest Daily News
Newsroom
33 New York Ave.
Framingham, MA
Phone: (508) 626-4412
www.metrowestdailynews.com

The Patriot Ledger
Newsroom
400 Crown Colony Drive
Quincy, MA 02269
Phone: (617) 786-7026
www.wickedlocal.com/patriotledger

The Republican
Newsroom
1860 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01101
Phone: (413) 788-1200
www.masslive.com/republican/

Telegram & Gazette
Newsroom
20 Franklin Street
Box 15012
Worcester, MA 01615
Phone: (508) 793-9100
www.telegram.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 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>.

³ D. 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>.

⁴ "About Us," Geovision, Inc., accessed 23 March 2008, <<http://www.geovisiononline.com/PAGES/ABOUT/L2/ABOUTmain.html>>.

⁵ C. Lee, "Bush Choice for Family-Planning Post Criticized," *Washington Post*, 17 November 2006, accessed 12 February 2007, <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/16/AR2006111601929.html?referrer=emailarticle>>.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ A. Estes, "Doctor who Quit US Post Was Warned by State," *Boston Globe*, 7 April 2007, accessed 11 April 2007, <http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2007/04/07/doctor_who_quit_us_post_was_warned_by_state/>.

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⁸ “Classroom Presentations,” Healthy Futures, (2003-2007), accessed 14 March 2008, <<http://www.healthy-futures.org/classroom.htm>>.

⁹ “Parent Programs,” Healthy Futures, Inc., (2003-2007), accessed 14 March 2008, <<http://www.healthy-futures.org/parent.htm>>.

¹⁰ SIECUS has identified this person as a state-based contact for information on adolescent health and if applicable, abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

¹¹ 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 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](#).