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The Department of Health and community-based organizations in Virginia received approximately \$3,316,066 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2007.¹

Virginia Sexuality Education Law and Policy

The Virginia Administrative Code states that all curriculum decisions are to be left to local school boards. Virginia gives permission for local school boards to develop sexuality education programs with the “goals of reducing the incidence of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases [STDs] and substance abuse among teenagers.” However, the state board of education is also required to develop standards and curriculum guidelines for kindergarten through twelfth grades. The guidelines set standards for “comprehensive, sequential family life education curriculum” that include age-appropriate instruction in “family living and community relationships, abstinence education, the value of postponing sexual activity, the benefits of adoption as a positive choice in the event of an unwanted pregnancy, human sexuality, human reproduction, steps to take to avoid sexual assault, and availability of counseling and legal resources.”

Virginia code requires each local school board to “place special emphasis on the thorough evaluation of materials related to controversial or sensitive topics such as sex education, moral education, and religion.”

In addition, every school board must establish a school health advisory board with no more than twenty members. These members should include parents, students, health professionals, educators, and others. The purpose of this advisory board is to “assist with the development of health policy in the school division and the evaluation of the status of school health, health education, the school environment, and health services.”

Each school board must create a summary of the family life education program available for distribution to parents and guardians for review. The law states that parents or guardians may remove their students from any class. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy. Virginia laws also state, “Parents should be required to justify their requests.”

See Virginia Administrative Code 8VAC20-131-170; Virginia Administrative Code 8VAC20-170-10; Code of Virginia 22.1-102-7.1, 22.1-207.2 and 22.1-275.1; and Virginia *Guidelines on Family Life Education*.

Recent Legislation

Bill to Expand Anti-Discrimination Practices

House Bill 2252, introduced in January 2007, would require “the city of Richmond, VA to enact an ordinance prohibiting discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations, credit and

education on the basis of sexual orientation.” The bill was tabled in the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns on February 2, 2007.

HPV Vaccine Required for Female Students

House Bill 2035, introduced in January 2007, requires female students 11 years of age or older who are in school to receive the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine series. The student’s parents or guardians may object to vaccination on religious or moral grounds. The bill was signed into law in April 2007 as Chapter No. 858.

Bill Requires Family Life Education to Include Dating Violence

House Bill 1916, introduced in January 2007 and referred to the House Committee on Education, amended the state code to require that instruction on dating violence and the characteristics of abusive relationships be included in Family Life Education. The bill passed in the Virginia House of Representatives on January 18, 2007 and the Senate on February 5, 2007. Governor Tim Kaine approved this measure on February 19, 2007; this law became effective on July 1, 2007.

Events of Note

*District Drops Updates to Avoid Curriculum Fight
August 2007; Alexandria, VA*

The Alexandria City Public Schools decided to shelve lessons on abortion and sexual orientation after initial objections from an ex-gay advocacy group and one school board member. The lessons were drafted as part of the review of the family-life education curricula and included a history of abortion in the United States, a video titled *What if I’m Gay?*, and discussions of both topics.²

A district spokesperson said that the video has been a part of the curriculum for the past decade and that information about abortion and sexual orientation has been taught since 1982.³ The difference is that the topics were previously taught from supplemental material in the textbooks, as opposed to the formal lessons that were proposed in January 2007.

The lesson plans became an issue, however, when a member of the Family-Life Education Advisory Committee objected to them. He argued that applicable Virginia laws should be included in the lessons. In particular, he wanted the classes to tell students that minors cannot obtain abortions without parental consent and that sodomy is a felony.⁴ (In 2003, the United States Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Lawrence v. Texas* that state laws outlawing sodomy were unconstitutional. Many states, including Virginia, continue to have anti-sodomy laws on the books but they cannot enforce them.)

Soon after the committee member’s objection, Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX) sent a letter to the district demanding that it include information on ex-gays—people who believe they have changed their sexual orientation from homosexual to heterosexual. “Why is there no mention of the ex-gay community in the lesson plan when every other sexual orientation is discussed and supported?” asked the executive director of PFOX.⁵

The district initially responded by saying that all materials would have to be vetted by the advisory committee. Months later, in August 2007, the district announced that the lessons would not be added to the curriculum for the 2007–08 school year, and that any changes would have to wait until the 2008–09 school year.⁶

Crisis Pregnancy Center Not Welcomed by Community
 May 2007; Charlottesville, VA

When Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, formerly known as the Charlottesville Pregnancy Center, approached the Charlottesville and Albermarle public schools offering its abstinence-only-until-marriage program, it was met with a less-than-enthusiastic response from community members.

Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia received \$645,000 of federal abstinence-only-until-marriage funding to provide its program, “Worth Your Wait.” The program uses a commercially available abstinence-only-until-marriage curriculum, *Why kNOW*, that is produced by a crisis pregnancy center in Tennessee. Worth Your Wait is in schools in Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Nelson, and Orange counties.

The organization held an information session at a local hotel to tell the community about its program. Proponents of abstinence-only-until-marriage programs came to speak on why the community, despite its hesitations, should adopt the program. One speaker “urged parents to build stronger relationships with their children” to supersede the influences from our “sex-saturated culture.” Martin Ssempe, an international abstinence advocate from Uganda, was also present to show his support. Known for burning boxes of condoms in his native country, Ssempe is a highly controversial figure in the abstinence-only-until-marriage industry.⁷

Many community members remained skeptical. An hour before the speaking began at the hotel, the local Planned Parenthood sponsored a “honk and wave for *real* sex ed” rally just a few miles away.⁸

The director of Pregnancy Center admitted that community members from Albemarle and Charlottesville have “proved less than receptive,” and a spokesperson for the city schools said they were not considering introducing *any* new programs.

Groups Speak Out Against Abstinence Presentation
 February 2007; Loudoun County, VA

In October 2006, citizens’ groups, along with the ACLU, questioned administrators in Loudoun County over their decision to invite Keith Deltano to speak at the high school.⁹ Deltano, who describes himself as an “educational comedian,” speaks to students across the country about the importance of abstinence-until-marriage. He was invited to speak by the principal; however, his performance was scheduled and paid for by Life Line Inc., a local evangelical crisis pregnancy center.

The ACLU sent a letter to the high school’s principal before the assembly hoping to ensure that the performance would not contain religious sentiments and preaching, that Deltano would not provide information about off-campus religious activities, and that he would not promote the crisis pregnancy center that funded his appearance.

The principal, however, said he had reviewed Deltano’s presentation and felt that it mirrored the county’s abstinence-only-until-marriage stance.¹⁰ Furthermore, the principal sent letters to parents about the assembly and provided students with the option of not attending the assembly.

Members of Mainstream Loudoun, a citizens group, watched the presentation. They reported that while he did steer clear of direct religious references, Deltano’s presentation was full of fear, shame, and medical inaccuracies. They shared this review with both school administrators and members of the media. In fact, as a result of their review the *Washington Post* ran a story under the headline “The Abstinence Shtick, Minus Jesus.”¹¹

Despite this negative press, Deltano was invited back to speak at two other high schools in the district in February 2007. When parents and members of Mainstream Loudoun learned of this, they invited SIECUS and local press outlets to come and review the performance.

In the presentation SIECUS attended, Deltano asserted that condoms are ineffective 10–30 percent of the time they’re used, derided birth control for being too easy to forget, and relied heavily on stereotypes of young men as “dumb” and sex-crazed and young women as only interested in love and marriage.¹² Accounts from other performances suggest that these are regular pieces of his act.¹³

After Deltano's second visit to Loudoun County, Mainstream Loudoun teamed with local churches to sponsor a different version of sexuality education. The groups invited educator Shelby Knox to screen her award-winning film about sexuality education, *The Education of Shelby Knox*. Speakers at the event questioned how Deltano's performance fit with Loudoun County's family life education program.

The superintendent of the district and a school board member attended the forum. The superintendent reassured the audience that Loudoun schools teach a full family life education curriculum that complies with state law. The board member, however, was a bit more skeptical, saying he was concerned that "an assembly speaker... would be invited to speak who is not qualified to meet the regulations" of the broader curriculum.¹⁴

Virginia's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

Virginia did not participate in the 2007 Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance Survey.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

The Virginia Department of Health was eligible for \$841,329 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 previous years, Virginia matched the federal money with \$375,098 of state funds. SIECUS was unable to obtain information on the exact amount the state received or how the required match is made up in Virginia. This money is controlled by the Abstinence Education Initiative, which is part of the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Family Health Services.

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding Status

In October 2007, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine released the commonwealth's Fiscal Year 2008 budget, which included a statement that Virginia would not be applying for Title V federal abstinence-only-until-marriage funds. Specifically, the Governor's budget states, "Eliminate general funding match for federal Abstinence Grant... Formal program evaluations at the federal level have indicated that this particular program is no more effective than any other birth control education effort."¹⁵ The decision goes into effect for Fiscal Year 2008.

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

There are four CBAE grantees in Virginia: Educational Guidance Institute, Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated, and The Pregnancy Center of Central Virginia, and Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program. There are two AFLA grantees in Virginia: The Boat People SOS and James Madison University (receives two grants).

The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia is a crisis pregnancy center (CPC). This CBAE grantee was formerly called the Charlottesville 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. The former Director of Client Services at Charlottesville Pregnancy Center is Moira Gaul. Ms. Gaul is now the Director of Women's and Reproductive Health at the Family Research Council, a national right-wing organization that "champions marriage and family as the foundation of civilization, the seedbed of virtue,

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and the wellspring of society...Believing that God is the author of life, liberty, and the family, FRC promotes the Judeo-Christian worldview as the basis for a just, free, and stable society.”¹⁶

Through its abstinence-only-until-marriage program, The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia claims to have reached over 30,000 youth through nine counties in central Virginia.¹⁷ The program uses a popular curriculum, *Why kNOW*. SIECUS reviewed *Why kNOW* and found that it offers limited information about important topics in human sexuality such as puberty, anatomy, and human reproduction, and no information about sexual orientation and gender identity. The information that is included is outdated, inaccurate, and misleading. In addition, *Why kNOW* relies on negative messages, distorts information, and presents biased views on gender, marriage, family structure, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. For example, the curriculum tells students that the tradition of lifting the veil shows that “the groom [is] the only man allowed to uncover the bride,” and demonstrates “her respect for him by illustrating that she [has] not allowed any other man to lay claim to her.”¹⁸

The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia’s website contains false and misleading information about pregnancy and abortion. It lists symptoms of “post-abortion stress,” including “self-destructive behaviors,” “relational difficulties,” and “confused thought.”¹⁹ In fact, there is no sound scientific evidence linking abortion to subsequent mental health problems, termed “post-abortion stress syndrome” by anti-abortion groups. Neither the American Psychological Association nor the American Psychiatric Association recognize “post-abortion stress syndrome” as a legitimate medical condition.²⁰

Educational Guidance Institute (EGI), another CBAE grantee, serves Fairfax County and Loudon County in Virginia, and Prince George’s County in Maryland.²¹ EGI conducts the “Project Heart to Heart in Love, Life, and Marriage” program using two curricula that it developed: *Relationships Under Construction* and *Love & Life at the Movies*.²²

Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated is located in Hampton, Virginia, and began a youth mentoring/abstinence program in 2006. Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program (Rapp-TAP) conducts abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in northern Virginia.

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)
Virginia Department of Health www.vdh.state.va.us	\$841,329* federal	Title V
Educational Guidance Institute 2005–2008 www.educationalguidance.org	\$698,840	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)
Lighthouse Outreach Incorporated 2007–2011 www.lighthouse-outreach.org	\$600,000	CBAE
The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia 2005–2008 www.virginiapregnancy.org	\$645,645	CBAE
Rappahannock Teen Abstinence Program 2007–2011 www.imworththewait.com	\$261,224	CBAE
The Boat People SOS 2002–2007 www.bpsos.org	\$100,00	AFLA
James Madison University 2004–2009 www.jmu.edu	\$269,031	AFLA

** SIECUS was unable to obtain the exact amount of Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding New Mexico received or how the funds were used in Fiscal Year 2007.*

Adolescent Health Contact²³

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 Office of Family Health Services
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 P.O. Box 2448
 Richmond, VA 23218
 Phone: (804) 864-7685

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Virginia Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Equality Virginia
403 N. Robinson St.
Richmond, VA 23220
Phone: (804) 643-4816
www.equalityvirginia.org

Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia
P.O. Box 14791
Richmond, VA 23221
Phone: (804) 355-4358
www.ppav.org

Virginia Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

American Life League
P.O. Box 1350
Stafford, VA 22555
Phone: (540) 659-4171
www.all.org

The Family Foundation
One Capital Square
830 East Main St., Suite 1201
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone: (804) 343-0010
www.familyfoundation.org

Newspapers in Virginia²⁴

Daily Press
Newsroom
P.O. Box 746
Newport News, VA 23607
Phone: (757) 247-4600
www.dailypress.com

The Free Lance-Star
Newsroom
616 Amelia St.
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
Phone: (540) 368-5055
www.fredericksburg.com

Richmond Times-Dispatch
Newsroom
P.O. Box 85333
Richmond, VA 23293
Phone: (804) 649-6990
www.timesdispatch.com

The News & Advance
Newsroom
101 Wyndale Dr.
Lynchburg, VA 24501
Phone: (434) 385-5440
www.newsadvance.com

The Roanoke Time & World News
Newsroom
P.O. Box 2491
Roanoke, VA 24010
Phone: (540) 981-3340
www.roanoke.com

The Virginian-Pilot
Newsroom
150 W. Brambleton Ave.
Norfolk, VA 23510
Phone: (757) 446-2319
www.hamptonroads.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 Arlo Wagner "Abortion, Gay Studies Considered," *Washington Times*, 15 January 2007, accessed 2 February 2007, <<http://washingtontimes.com/metro/20070114-110812-4570r.htm>>.

³ Maria Hegstad, "Controversial Sex-Ed Lessons Won't Be Taught This Year," *The Examiner* (VA), 15 August 2007, 4 September 2007, <www.examiner.com/a-881833~Controversial_sex_ed_lessons_won_t_be_taught_this_year.html>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Lucie Stone, “No-Sex Ed: Abstinence-Only Aims For Local Support,” *The Hook* (VA), 3 May 2007, accessed 3 May 2007, <www.readthehook.com/stories/2007/05/03/news-worthyourwait-E.rtf.aspx>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Michael Alison Chandler, “The Abstinence Shtick, Minus Jesus,” *Washington Post*, 13 October 2006, accessed 8 January 2008, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/12/AR2006101201576.html>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *SIECUS Speaker Review: Keith Deltano “The New Sexual Revolution” or “Abstinence is Cool”* (New York: SIECUS, 2007), accessed 10 January 2008, <www.communityactionkit.org/reviews/Deltano.html>.

¹³ Charlie Jackson, “Deltano Returns Over Objections to Promote Abstinence,” *Leesburg Today*, 11 February 2007, accessed 12 February 2007,

<www.leesburg2day.com/articles/2007/02/11/schools/edt85deltano021107.txt>.

¹⁴ Michael Alison Chandler, “Christian Sex-Ed Lesson Criticized,” *The Washington Post*, 15 March 2007, accessed 19 March 2007, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/14/AR2007031400013.html>.

¹⁵ *Governor’s FY08 Budget Reduction Plan: Detailed Report*, (Richmond, VA: Department of Planning and Budget, 1 October 2007), p. 35, accessed 7 April 2008, <<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/TempContent/2008BudgetReductionPlan10-01-2007.pdf>>.

¹⁶ “Home: Biography: Moira Gaul,” Family Research Council, (2008), accessed 19 February 2008,

<<http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=BY07B02>>; “About FRC,” Family Research Council, (2008), accessed 19 February 2008,

<http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?c=ABOUT_FRC>.

¹⁷ Virginia Department of Health, “Adolescent Sexual Health Newsletter,” (December 05- January 06), accessed 19 February 2008, <<http://www.vahealth.org/abstinence/documents/Dec-Jan06Newsletter.pdf>>.

¹⁸ Kris Frainie, *Why kNOw Abstinence Education Program Teacher’s Manual*, (Chattanooga, TN: Why kNOw Abstinence Education Programs, A Division of AAA Women’s Services, 2002). For more information, see SIECUS’ review of *Why kNOw* at <<http://www.communityactionkit.org/reviews/WhyKnow.html>>.

¹⁹ “Abortion: Post Abortion,” The Pregnancy Centers of Central Virginia, accessed 19 February 2008,

<<http://www.virginiapregnancy.org/abortion-after-abortion.aspx>>.

²⁰ Susan Cohen, “Abortion and Mental Health: Myths and Realities,” *Guttmacher Policy Review* vol. 9, no. 3 (Summer 2006), accessed 30 January 2007, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/gpr/09/3/gpr090308.html>>.

²¹ Virginia Department of Health, “Adolescent Sexual Health Newsletter,” (December 05- January 06), accessed 19 February 2008, <<http://www.vahealth.org/abstinence/documents/Dec-Jan06Newsletter.pdf>>.

²² Ibid.

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 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](#).