



## WEST VIRGINIA

*West Virginia received \$385,852 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.<sup>1</sup>*

### West Virginia Sexuality Education Law and Policy

West Virginia law does not require sexuality education, but does require HIV/AIDS-prevention education in sixth through twelfth grades. According to a West Virginia legislative rule, “the goal of this policy is to assist in the protection of students by providing them with the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid behaviors that will put them at the risk of infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).”

Each county board must integrate HIV-prevention education into health courses and may also include it in science, development, and social studies courses. Educators conducting classroom instruction about HIV/AIDS must be qualified professionals who participate in staff development to ensure they teach current AIDS information. West Virginia does not require any specific curriculum; however, the Board of Education’s *Health Content Standards and Objectives* curriculum framework includes sexuality education.

Parents or guardians may remove their children from any part of this instruction by written notification to the principal. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

See Legislative Rule of the West Virginia Board of Education 126-50A and 126-50B, West Virginia Board of Education Policies 2422.4, 2422.45, and 2520.5.

### Recent Legislation

#### *Bill Introduces Standards for Faith-Based, Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs*

House Bill 2312, introduced in January 2007, would require faith-based, abstinence-only-until-marriage, and anti-choice facilities to give full information to “pregnant girls and women” regarding sex education, contraception, abortion, and other subjects. The bill is currently in the House Committee on Health and Human Resources.

#### *Legislation Allows Counseling of Students in Sex Education*

House Bill 2538 would allow employees of the state board of education or county board to counsel a student in “basic sex education, societal expectations and roles of men and women, and birth control methods, including abstinence, medications, devices, and abortion,” upon the request of the student or when it appears to be in the student’s best interest. This counseling must remain confidential. The bill was introduced in January 2007 and currently resides in the Committee on Education.

*Bill Bans Counseling about or Referring to Abortion*

House Bill 2143 and Senate Bill 68 would prohibit any person “employed by, compensated by, or providing any services for the State Board or any county board” from counseling, referring, transporting, or assisting a student with obtaining an abortion. Both bills were introduced in January 2006. The Senate Bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Education and the House Bill was referred to the House Committee on Health and Human Resources.

*Schools To Display Fetal Models*

House Bill 3124 would require fetal models to be displayed in every secondary and middle school for at least two one-month periods during the school year. If a school does not comply, it can be fined “no less than three hundred dollars for each day the models are not displayed.” The bill was introduced in March 2005 and referred to the House Committee on Education.

**Events of Note**

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

**West Virginia’s Youth: Statistical Information of Note<sup>2</sup>**

- In 2003, 55% of female high school students and 49% of male high school students in West Virginia reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 45% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 4% of female high school students and 10% of male high school students in West Virginia 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 2003, 17% of female high school students and 16% of male high school students in West Virginia reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 11% of female high school students and 18% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 44% of female high school students and 34% of male high school students in West Virginia 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 34% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 21% of females and 30% of males in West Virginia reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 30% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 58% of females and 74% of males in West Virginia reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 57% of females and 69% of males nationwide.

- In 2003, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 28% of females and 21% of males in West Virginia reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 13% of males nationwide.
- In 2003, 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students in West Virginia reported ever having been pregnant or gotten someone pregnant compared to 5% of female high school students and 4% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, 89% of high school students in West Virginia reported having been taught about HIV/AIDS in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2000, West Virginia's abortion rate was 10 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2004, West Virginia's birth rate was 44 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 nationwide.<sup>4</sup>

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

West Virginia received \$385,852 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2006. 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 West Virginia, the state match is provided by sub-grantees. West Virginia Office of Maternal and Child Health oversees this money. The program focuses on young people ages 12–29 and their parents.

The WVAEP uses some of its funding to support an interactive website which includes a “Frequently Asked Questions” section. In response to the question, “Are condoms an effective method of birth control?” the West Virginia Abstinence Education Project answers:

Condoms greatly reduce the risk of pregnancy, by about 90%, if they are used correctly, if they are used every time you have sex or put the penis near the vagina, if they don't break or leak (doesn't happen often, but it happens), if they don't slip off, and if the contents are not spilled near the vagina after sex.

*We couldn't resist pointing out two things here:*

1. It sounds like a lot has to go just perfect for this to protect you.
2. Condoms don't protect you from the some of the bad emotional feelings you may get when you have sex.<sup>5</sup>

The FAQ section also categorizes oral sex, anal sex, and mutual masturbation as sex and warns that even mutual masturbation can put one in danger of catching STDs.<sup>6</sup>

The remaining funding is distributed among five sub-grantees: Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia, The Gabriel Project of West Virginia (The Northern Panhandle Coalition for Abstinence Education), Rainelle Medical Center, Regeneration, Inc., and the Women's Care Center. All curricula used by sub-grantees must be approved by the West Virginia Abstinence Education Project (WVAEP) after publishers confirm in writing that materials have been reviewed by a medical team. SIECUS was unable to determine which curricula were used by sub-grantees in West Virginia.

The Gabriel Project of West Virginia (northern and eastern panhandles) implements in-school abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in parochial schools. The Rainelle Medical Center's program provides in-school abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to middle and high schools. As part of Rainelle Medical Centers program, 84 students at the Meadow Bridge High School signed a "Prom Promise Abstinence Pledge."<sup>7</sup> Research has found that under certain conditions such pledges, often called virginity pledges, may only 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. 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>8</sup>

Rainelle Medical Center staff also provides presentations for parents and community groups such as The Greenbrier County Homemakers Club and The Greenbrier County Garden Club.<sup>9</sup>

Regeneration Inc. is a nonprofit organization that focuses on a range of family and youth education activities including abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, character education, and financial and marriage training.<sup>10</sup> Its abstinence-only-until-marriage program is called "Project CHAT (Communities Hearing Abstinence Truth)." The program is currently in Ritchie, Marion, Doddridge, Harrison, and Taylor counties and is expanding throughout north-central West Virginia. Since 2002, it has reached 15,000 students. All Regeneration, Inc.'s programs focus on "Six Pillars of Good Character," which Regeneration, Inc. lists as "Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship."<sup>11</sup>

The Women's Care Center 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. A Woman's Care Center describes itself as a "Christian, pro-life ministry existing for the purpose of presenting the love and gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed." Among other things it offers "educational information on pregnancy, fetal development, and abortion alternatives."<sup>12</sup>

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

There are no CBAE or AFLA grantees in West Virginia.

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**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>
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services  <a href="http://www.wvdhhr.org">www.wvdhhr.org</a>	\$385,852 federal	Title V
Community Action of South Eastern West Virginia  <a href="http://www.casewv.org">www.casewv.org</a>	\$47,667	Title V sub-grantee
The Gabriel Project of West Virginia (The Northern Panhandle Coalition for Abstinence Education)  <a href="http://www.gabrielwv.org">www.gabrielwv.org</a>	\$44,667	Title V sub-grantee
Rainelle Medical Center  <a href="http://www.rmchealth.org">www.rmchealth.org</a>	\$44,667	Title V sub-grantee
Regeneration, Inc.  <a href="http://www.regenerationministries.org">www.regenerationministries.org</a>	\$89,334	Title V sub-grantee
Women's Care Center  <a href="http://www.yourpregnancychoices.com">www.yourpregnancychoices.com</a>	\$34,667	Title V sub-grantee

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

Patty McGrew, Project Coordinator  
 WV Abstinence Education Project  
 1316 Kanawha Blvd., Room 39  
 Charleston, WV 25301  
 Phone: (304) 558-5722

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**West Virginia Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

ACLU of West Virginia  
P.O. Box 3952  
Charleston, WV 25339  
Phone: (304) 345-9246  
[www.aclu-wv.org](http://www.aclu-wv.org)

Inside and OUT  
P.O. Box 5835  
Huntington, WV 25703  
Phone: (304) 523-3121  
[www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/6273/Lr.htm](http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/6273/Lr.htm)

Rainbow Pride of West Virginia  
P.O. Box 2624  
Charleston, WV 25329  
Phone: (304) 345-9938  
[www.pridewv.org](http://www.pridewv.org)

West Virginia Lesbian and Gay Coalition  
P.O. Box 11033  
Charleston, WV 25339  
Phone: (304) 343-7305  
[www.members.aol.com/wvlgc](http://www.members.aol.com/wvlgc)

**West Virginia Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

West Virginia Family Foundation  
P.O. Box 3421  
Charleston, WV 25334  
Phone: (304) 965-6700  
[www.wvfamily.org](http://www.wvfamily.org)

West Virginians for Life  
427 Spruce St.  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
Phone: (304) 291-LIFE  
[www.wvforLife.org](http://www.wvforLife.org)

**Newspapers in West Virginia**

*Bluefield Daily Telegraph*  
Kathy Kish  
Medical/Health Writer  
928 Bluefield Ave.  
Bluefield, WV 24701  
Phone: (304) 327-2800

*Charleston Daily Mail*  
Monica Orosz  
Medical/Health Editor  
1001 Virginia St. E  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: (304) 348-4830

*Charleston Gazette*  
Phil Kabler  
Reporter  
1001 Virginia St. E  
Charleston, WV 25301  
Phone: (304) 348-1220

*Dominion Post*  
Pam Queen  
Medical/Health Editor  
1251 Earl L. Core Rd.  
Morgantown, WV 26505  
Phone: (304) 291-9425

*Coal Valley Newspapers, Inc.*  
Valerie Carpenter  
Staff Writer  
475 Lower Main St.  
Madison, WV 25130  
Phone: (304) 369-1165

*Herald-Dispatch*  
Don Willis  
Medical/Health Editor  
946 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Huntington, WV 25701  
Phone: (304) 526-2782

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*Herald-Dispatch*

Sarah Zopfi  
Education Reporter  
946 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
Huntington, WV 25701  
Phone: (304) 526-2773

*The Lincoln Journal, Inc.*

Phyllis Stowers  
Education Editor  
328 Walnut St  
Hamlin, WV 25523  
Phone: (304) 824-5101

*Mountain Messenger*

Education Editor  
122 N. Court St.  
Lewisburg, WV 24901  
Phone: (304) 647-5724

*News and Sentinel*

Jolene Craig  
Staff Writer  
519 Juliana St.  
Parkersburg, WV 26101  
Phone: (304) 485-1891

*Wheeling News-Register*

Betsy Bethel-McFarland  
Medical/Health Editor  
1500 Main St.  
Wheeling, WV 26003  
Phone: (304) 233-0100

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<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> Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from Jo Anne Grunbaum, et al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2003," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 53.SS-2 (21 May 2004): 1-95, accessed 28 January 2005, <<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/yrbs/>>. West Virginia did not participate in the 2005 YRBS.

<sup>3</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>4</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>5</sup> "Frequently Asked Questions About Sex," West Virginia Abstinence Education Project, (2005), accessed 17 November 2005, <<http://www.wvdhhr.org/mcfh/ica/Abstinence/FAQ.htm>>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "State Plan for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families," State of West Virginia, (January 2006), accessed 10 April 2007, <[http://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/family\\_assistance/documents/StatePlan\\_2006\\_2008\\_TANF.swf](http://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/family_assistance/documents/StatePlan_2006_2008_TANF.swf)>.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Bearman and Hannah Brückner, "Promising the Future: Virginitiy 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 Virginitiy Pledges," *Journal of Adolescent Health* 36.4 (2005): 271-278.

<sup>9</sup> "State Plan," State of West Virginia, (2006-2008), accessed 8 February 2007, <[http://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/family\\_assistance/documents/StatePlan\\_2006\\_2008\\_TANF.swf](http://www.wvdhhr.org/bcf/family_assistance/documents/StatePlan_2006_2008_TANF.swf)>.

<sup>10</sup> "Home," Regeneration Inc., (2006), accessed 9 February 2007, <<http://www.regenerationwv.org/Home/tabid/132/Default.aspx>>.

<sup>11</sup> "Project CHAT," Regeneration Inc., (2006), accessed 9 February 2007, <<http://www.regenerationwv.org/ProjectCHAT/tabid/168/Default.aspx>>.

<sup>12</sup> "About Us," The Women's Care Center, (2006), accessed 8 February 2007, <<http://www.yourpregnancychoices.com/about.html>>.