



Washington

Washington received \$1,881,364 in federal funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2003.¹

Washington Sexuality Education Law

School districts in Washington are not required to implement comprehensive sexuality education. If a school district chooses to do so, parents may take their children out of the class with written permission. This is referred to as an “opt-out” policy.

School districts are required to teach HIV/AIDS prevention education and emphasize abstinence-until-marriage as a prevention method. Contraceptives, including condoms, must not be presented as “certain means” of prevention. Information must be current and medically accurate. Parents or guardians may remove their children from HIV/AIDS-prevention education if they have attended one information session about the HIV/AIDS curriculum and presentation.

See Revised Code of Washington Section 28A.230.070.

Recent Legislation

The Washington legislature carried bills over from the 2003 to the 2004 session. Washington’s legislative session ended on March 11, 2004.

Medically Accurate Sexuality Education Bills Die

Bills requiring that sexuality education paid for with public funds be medically accurate were introduced in both the House and Senate. House Bill 1178, introduced in January 2003, was amended in February and passed the House on March 7, 2003. The bill recognized the importance of medically and factually accurate information about sexuality, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases to the health of young people.

The bill required that courses teach abstinence as the most effective way to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, but stipulated that school districts have the discretion to choose any curriculum as long as it is medically accurate. The House bill also stipulated that any discussion of success or failure rates of contraceptives in any program, including abstinence-only programs, among other topics, must use medically accurate information.

The bill was amended slightly and sent to committee in the Senate but returned to a House committee without further action. The House committee reintroduced the bill by resolution in early June 2003 but no further action was taken.

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 2003 begins on October 1, 2002 and ends on September 30, 2003.

Senate Bill 5314, introduced in January 2003, also required that all sexuality education be medically accurate. SB 5314 is the same as HB 1178 as originally written. No further action was taken and both bills died at the end of the legislative session.

“Truth in Describing Sex Education Act” Died

In January 2004 the *Truth in Describing Sex Education Act* was introduced “to help parents clearly identify the type of curriculum being taught, assist community committee members in selecting the best materials to comply with school district policy, and support teachers in complying with their school district policy.”

The bill included the federal government’s eight-point definition of “abstinence education” and mandated that all school districts decide whether their sexuality education programs fit within that definition and are thus “abstinence education” or whether the programs “describe sexual behaviors not included in the definition” and are thus “comprehensive sex education” programs.

The bill died at the end of the legislative session.

Comprehensive, Medically Accurate Sexuality Education Bills Die

Senate Bill 6431, the *Health Information for Youth Act*, was introduced with bi-partisan support on January 20, 2004. It stated that all students receiving health instruction that is in some way paid for with public funds may receive “health information and disease prevention instruction.” According to the bill, such instruction includes medically and scientifically accurate information that is age-appropriate, encourages family communication, states that abstinence is the only sure way to prevent pregnancy and reduce the risk of sexually transmitted disease, stresses abstinence while also addressing the health needs of sexually active students, and provides information about contraceptives and barrier methods.

The legislation would have also required the Washington State Department of Health to work with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop comprehensive sexuality education guidelines for health information and disease prevention for publicly funded schools.

The bill was sponsored by State Senator Shirley Winsley (R-Fircrest) and co-sponsored by 13 Republican and Democratic senators.

The bill passed the Committee on Health and Long Term Care on February 5, 2004 by a unanimous vote of 7 to 0, but later died when it was referred to the Senate Committee on Education.

A companion bill, House Bill 2789, was introduced in the House on January 20, 2004. This bill was sponsored by a bipartisan group of 21 representatives. The bill died at the end of the legislative session.

Family Preservation Education Program Died

Senate Bill 5603, introduced on January 31, 2003, seeks to strengthen family communication and relationship skills by requiring that each school district’s board of directors develop and adopt a family preservation education program curriculum. Under the legislation, a model curriculum would be developed by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the board of directors could choose to accept that curriculum or develop its own and submit it for approval.

The original bill stated that each student would be required to participate unless a parent or guardian excused him/her, also known as an “opt-out” provision. That was amended on February 5, 2004 to make the class available, but not required, to high school students.

The bill, as amended, passed the Senate Committee on Education on February 5, 2004 and the Rules Committee on February 11 but died at the end of the legislative session.

Events of Note

Advocates Work on Policy

Washington advocates continue to work for comprehensive sexuality education. In 2003, a coalition of choice groups, HIV/AIDS prevention groups, LGBTQ organizations, and parent advocacy organizations helped to introduce legislation that would require all sexuality education and abstinence-only-until-marriage programs to be medically accurate. (See “recent legislation.”)

During a hearing in the Washington House Healthcare Committee on January 29, 2003, students who had participated in *SHARE (Sexuality, Health, and Relationship Education)*, an abstinence-only-until-marriage program, testified that the program had presented inaccurate and misleading information regarding condoms, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases. This legislation and testimony generated a good deal of press, which has raised the level of public discussion around the need for medically accurate comprehensive sexuality education in Washington State. Ultimately, the legislation did not pass.

Governor Asked to Reject Title V Funds

In 2002, the Governor’s Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS (GACHA) asked Governor Gary Locke (D) to reject the federal Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage funding in part because of concerns that the Bush Administration and a Republican-controlled U.S. Congress will put stricter requirements on the program.

In the letter to Governor Locke, GACHA Chair Judith Billings stated that abstinence-only-until-marriage programs “do not give students complete information that they need to help them make responsible choices about their sexual activity. To deny them a balanced program that offers life-saving knowledge is irresponsible.” The letter also pointed out that the federal government’s eight-point definition is about “ideology, not scientifically stated factors.”

“Council members are strongly in favor of comprehensive health education which includes abstinence as a choice, but just as strongly unanimously oppose attempted indoctrination to a particular political/moral dogma that attempts to pass as good public education,” the letter said. GACHA also emphasized that the program’s insistence on sexual intercourse only within the confines of marriage is harmful to gay and lesbian youth and those living in nontraditional households and that it offers “only shame and fear” to sexually abused youth.

Governor Locke responded through the Secretary of the Department of Health, Mary C. Selecky. In her letter to GACHA, Secretary Selecky noted that in order to reject the funding statutory changes would have to be made to current Washington law. She also stated that programs funded with Title V money are “only one component of a comprehensive sexuality education program for communities, clients, and partners of clients.” She further stated that all Title V funded programs must be “consistent with public health and scientific and medical accuracy.”²

² “Washington State HIV/AIDS Council Asks Governor to Reject Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Title V Funding,” *SIECUS Policy Update*, January 2003. Available online at <http://www.siecus.org/policy/PUupdates/pdate0045.html>.

Washington's Youth: Statistical Information of Note

- In 2000, Washington's abortion rate was 26 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.³
- In 2001, Washington's birth rate was 36 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 compared to a teen birth rate of 45 per 1,000 nationwide.⁴

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

Washington received \$739,012 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2003. 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 can be provided in part or in full by local groups. In Washington, the federal funds are matched by \$200,000 of state appropriations through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.

In 1997, the Washington State legislature began requiring the Department of Health to apply for the Title V federal funding and to allocate the additional \$200,000. The \$200,000 must be used for the *Teen Aware Program*, which is run by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The rest of the money was granted to five other providers: the Family Planning Council of Clallam County, Lummi Indian Business Council, Lutheran Community Services of the Northwest, Whatcom County Pregnancy Center, and Seattle Public Schools.⁵

The *Teen Aware Program* began in 1994. The program encompasses over 200 middle schools and high schools in over 100 districts. *Teen Aware* participants develop their own media campaigns to support teenage sexual abstinence. This program focuses on teen pregnancy and rarely mentions STDs or HIV/AIDS. The website for this project highlights several posters designed by students. One poster shows what appears to be a penis covered in genital warts. The slogan reads, "Imagine this growing down there. Is it worth it? Abstinence is the safe choice." Another poster shows a man and a woman standing next to a bed. The man is thinking, "She's hot!" The woman, wearing a bra and underwear, is thinking, "I know that we'll be together forever." The slogan reads, "Does SEX Mean To You What It Means to Him?"

Special Projects of Regional and National Significance—Community Based Abstinence Education (SPRANS—CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are currently two SPRANS—CBAE grantees in Washington State: the Pregnancy Resource Center and Teen-Aid. In Fiscal Year 2001, Spokane School District #81 received a one-year SPRANS—CBAE planning grant for \$74,500. There are no AFLA grantees in Washington.

Teen-Aid's SPRANS—CBAE grant is entitled *I've Got Connections*. This grant began in 2001 and will end in 2004. According to Teen-Aid's website, "the heart of this grant is to develop a saturation model that will enable small organizations to reach communities with the abstinence until marriage message using a variety of vehicles."

I've Got Connections uses outreach, media, and written materials, including billboards, radio commercials, and speakers. The billboards advertise a phone line, TeleWeb, that provides

³ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information*, (New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, February, 2004). Available online at www.guttmacher.org.

⁴ A. Papillo, et.al., *Facts at a Glance*, (Washington, DC: Child Trends, February, 2004).

⁵ According to the Washington Department of Health, *Teen Aware* is not funded in 2004. Thus all programs that received funding though Teen Aware will not receive funding in 2004.

information on events to keep children active, information on “sexuality issues of sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, and relationships,” and connections with “pregnancy counseling and services.”⁶

The project’s brochures and posters discuss topics such as “refusal skills, compatibility comparisons for dating, assessment of dating relationships, boundary setting, understanding the benefits of marriage and returning to abstinence.” *I’ve Got Connections* also offers curricula for elementary, middle, and high school students. Speakers for the project are recruited and trained through the SHARE program and supplement the regular curriculum or presenter in a community setting.

Teen-Aid produces several curricula, including *Sexuality, Commitment & Family*. According to a SIECUS review, this curriculum relies on fear and shame, includes inaccurate and exaggerated information about condom failure, and contains biased messages about gender, sexual orientation, family structure, and pregnancy options.

For example, in one lesson students write an essay entitled “If Wombs Had Windows,” in which they speculate how individuals and society might behave differently if, “we could see the unborn child developing in the womb.” In the condom lesson from another Teen-Aid curriculum, entitled *Me, My World, My Future*, teachers compare using a condom to playing Russian Roulette.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2003⁷

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantees Length of Grant	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS–CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Washington State Department of Health www.doh.wa.gov	\$739,012 federal/ \$200,000 state	Title V
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction www.k12.wa.us/teenaware/overview.asp		Title V sub-grantee
Family Planning Council of Clallam County www.familyplanningofcc.org		Title V sub-grantee
Lummi Indian Business Council		Title V sub-grantee

⁶See website at http://www.teen-aid.org/Ive_Got_Connections.htm.

⁷ SIECUS was not able to obtain exact funding information for all grantees.

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantees Length of Grant	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Lutheran Community Services of the Northwest www.lcsnw.org		Title V sub-grantee
Whatcom County Pregnancy Center		Title V sub-grantee
Seattle Public Schools www.seattleschools.org/area/main/index.dxml		Title V sub-grantee
Teen-Aid 2001-2004 www.teen-aid.org	\$751,352	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)
Pregnancy Resource Center 2002-2005	\$391,000	SPRANS-CBAE (Implementation Grant)

Past Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Program Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant Money	Type of Grant (includes SPRANS-CBAE, Title V, and AFLA)
Spokane School District #81 2001-2002 www.spokaneschools.org	\$74,500	SPRANS-CBAE (Planning Grant)

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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Washington Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of WA
705 Second Ave., Suite 300
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-2184

League of Women Voters of Washington
4710 University Way NE
Seattle, WA 98105
Phone: (206) 622-8961

Lifelong AIDS Alliance
1002 East Seneca
Seattle, WA 98122
Phone: (206) 957-1612
www.lifelongaidsalliance.org

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of
Washington
P.O. Box 7648
Olympia, WA 98507
Phone: (360) 705-1965

Religious Coalition for
Reproductive Choice of
Washington
P.O. Box 45337
Seattle, WA 98105
Phone: (206) 632-2445

Washington State NARAL
811 First Ave., Suite 456
Seattle, WA 98104
Phone: (206) 624-1990
www.wanaral.org

Washington Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Human Life of Washington
2601 151st Pl. NE
Redmond, WA 98052
Phone: (425) 882-4397

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Newspapers in Washington

Bellingham Weekly

Tim Johnson
Executive Editor
1329 N. State St
Bellingham, WA 98225
Phone: (360) 676-1966

King Co. Journal Newspapers

Robert Whale
Editor
600 Washington Ave S.
Kent, WA 98032
Phone: (253) 872-6600

Korea Times Seattle Edition

Hyunsuk Kim
Community News Reporter
12532 Aurora Ave N.
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The Local Planet

Education Editor
522 W. Riverside Ave
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Northwest Family News

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