

Trump attempts to shift TPPP to promote abstinence-only ideology

A TIMELINE

The Office of Adolescent Health's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program, or TPPP, has been making headlines in recent months. TPPP was created to support evidence-based programs and innovative approaches to help young people avoid pregnancies and promote their overall sexual health.

However, the Trump administration has different plans for the program. Rather than relying on research, public opinion, and/or the congressional intent of the program itself, Trump officials have worked to use TPPP as a means of steering additional funding into ineffective, shaming abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

Flying in the face of best practices for scientific evaluation, this administration is tirelessly working to re-write requirements for TPPP to promote their ideologically driven abstinence-only approach—which they've recently rebranded as "Sexual Risk Avoidance."

But supporters of sexual and reproductive health and rights continue to fight back—in the courts and in Congress—to protect the integrity of a program that has helped millions of young people across the country.

With so much back and forth around TPPP, we created a timeline of events, starting with the creation of the program itself, and continuing through the administration's latest attempt to manipulate an effective, evidence-based sexual health promotion program into yet another funding stream for their harmful and wildly unpopular abstinence-only-until-marriage programs.

May 2009

- President Obama releases his FY 2010 budget request, emphasizing a desire to build rigorous evidence that drives policy within his legislative agenda.
- This budget includes a request for \$110 million under the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for a two-tiered evidence-based program on teen pregnancy prevention in the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH), a new office created to oversee this program.

December 2009

- Congress passes the FY 2010 appropriations bill, including an allocation of \$114.5 million toward teen pregnancy prevention initiatives that are medically accurate, age-appropriate, and discuss abstinence *and* contraception.
- \$110 million is slated for "competitive contracts and grants to public and private entities to fund medically accurate and age appropriate programs that reduce teen pregnancy." A minimum of \$75 million must be used on replicating programs that have been proven effective, and a minimum of \$25 million must be available to research and test new models and innovative strategies.
- This same funding package also eliminates all funding for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, marking the first time since 1981 that these harmful programs did not receive federal funding through the appropriations process.

March 2010

- TPPP is created and funded by Congress. Congress requires TPPP to use models that are proven through rigorous evaluation to be effective in reducing teen pregnancy.

April 2010

- HHS releases Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for TPPP, labeled Tier 1 (for replications of effective program models) and Tier 2 (for innovative approaches to teen pregnancy prevention).

September 2010

- After a competitive grant process, OAH awards \$75 million to 75 grantees to replicate evidence-based programs, and \$25 million to 24 grantees to develop and test new and innovative programs.

April 2011

- In a last-minute deal, after months of funding the government by a series of seven continuing resolutions, Congress passes a budget deal for FY 2011.
- TPPP is funded at \$104.8 million, down more than five million dollars from FY 2010 funding.

December 2011

- Congress passes an omnibus spending bill for FY 2012, funding TPPP at the same level, but increasing funds for evaluating TPPP from \$4.4 million to \$8.5 million.

March 2013

- For FY 2013, Congress cuts TPPP funding to an all-time low of \$98.4 million after sequestration.

January 2014

- After a government shutdown, Congress enacts an omnibus spending bill, and increases funding for TPPP to \$101 million. TPPP funding has remained level ever since.

June 2014

- HHS releases a public comment request for a rule regarding a cost and economic impact study of TPPP.

September 2014

- Funding concludes for the first cohort of Tier 1 and Tier 2 grantees (FY 2010 – FY 2014).

January 2015

- The new FOAs for the second cohort of TPPP grantees are released, expanding funding opportunities to add Tier 1B (replications of evidence-based programs in communities with the greatest need) and Tier 2B (designed to test new or innovative approaches).

June 2015

- The House Appropriations Committee advances a funding bill for Labor-HHS for the first time in six years. The bill, which was not brought to the House floor for a vote, cut \$3.7 billion from

then-current funding levels and was \$14.6 billion less than President Obama's request for FY 2016.

- Republicans block amendments from Democrats that would have supported funding for TPPP in this bill.

July 2015

- HHS awards grants to the second cohort of grantees, including 29 returning grantees who had previously been awarded FY 2010-2014 grants.
- Although these grants are intended to go until 2020, the awards contain language noting that the first year of funding is guaranteed, and future funding is subject to the "availability of funds and satisfactory progress of the project."
- The awards, however, provided no stipulations that funding could be cut off midway through the project period without justification or notice, particularly if funds remained available and project progress was satisfactory.

May 2017

- President Trump releases his budget proposal called, 'A New Foundation for American Greatness,' that proposes completely eliminating TPPP.

June 2017

- Valerie Huber, the leader of the abstinence-only-until-marriage movement, is appointed Chief of Staff to the Assistant Secretary for Health for HHS. This office oversees TPPP.

July 2017

- HHS notifies 81 TPPP grantees currently finishing year two of five-year project periods that their awards will be abruptly terminated on June 30, 2018—two years earlier than expected and before Congress has made any funding decisions for the 2018 fiscal year.

November 2017

- Huber and her colleagues at HHS' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH), along with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announce a new, multimillion dollar effort to "improve" OASH programs, including TPPP, to refocus them to better align with abstinence-only-until-marriage ideology.
- [Democracy Forward Foundation sues HHS](#) for refusing to disclose information related to the abrupt termination of TPPP project grant periods—and focuses specifically on uncovering the role that Huber played in these decisions.

February 2018

- The President's budget blueprint for fiscal year 2019, again, calls for the elimination of TPPP.
- Four separate lawsuits are filed on behalf of ten grantees in Washington state, Maryland, and Washington, DC to sue the Trump administration for the illegal termination of TPPP grant periods.

March 2018

- [NBC News](#) reveals that the attacks on TPPP came from the Administration's political appointees (namely, Huber) despite objections from career staff within HHS.

April 2018

- [Healthy Futures of Texas files a class-action lawsuit](#) on behalf of all remaining Tier 1 TPPP grantees—represented by the Public Citizen Litigation Group.
- HHS releases new Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs), that call for Tier 1 and Tier 2 grantees to utilize an abstinence-only-until-marriage approach—referred to as “sexual risk avoidance.” This announcement shows a clear shift in requirements for TPPP: away from evidence-based, evaluation-focused programs to those that support an abstinence-only ideology.

May 2018

- Federal judges in each of the four cases brought against HHS rule in favor of TPPP. They find that the Trump administration illegally terminated the TPPP grants and order HHS to accept and process the grantees’ year-four funding applications.

June 2018

- For the fifth time, a federal judge rules in favor of TPPP. The class-action lawsuit, filed on behalf of 62 TPPP grantees, reinforces the previous decisions that the grant terminations were illegal.
- [Planned Parenthood files two lawsuits](#) – one in Spokane, Washington and one in New York City – against HHS over the new Tier 1 and Tier 2 FOA guidelines. These cases argue that the new abstinence-only requirements go against congressional intent for the program, as they do not require programs to be tested or proven to work.
- [Multnomah County, Oregon also files suit](#) over the new Tier 1 FOA. Represented by Democracy Forward, this lawsuit similarly argues that the new grant criteria violate Congress’ mandate for rigorously evaluated programs and showed an ideological preference for abstinence-only programs.
- The Senate FY 2019 Labor-HHS funding bill advances out of committee on a bipartisan vote. The bill contains level funding of \$101 million for TPPP, but also includes a \$10 million increase to the abstinence-only-until-marriage “sexual risk avoidance” program.

July 2018

- The House advances its own Labor-HHS funding bill out of committee. The bill proposes a complete elimination of TPPP, as well as a \$5 million increase for the abstinence-only-until-marriage “sexual risk avoidance” program.

August 2018

- The April 2018 Tier 1 FOA (which prioritized abstinence-only programs) is vacated after two court victories in favor of TPPP. Judges in Multnomah County and New York City find that the Tier 1 FOA unlawfully violated Congressional intent for the program. The Tier 2 challenge in New York City is rejected by the court. These are the sixth and seventh court decisions against the Trump administration’s attempt to dismantle TPPP.

September 2018

- [HHS announces the grant amounts and organizations](#) to which it would have issued a total of \$19.4 million in Tier 1 awards had the FOA not been vacated. As part of this political stunt, HHS disregards the unlawful nature of their actions and blames the Tier 1 FOA lawsuit plaintiffs for the awards going unfunded.

- HHS obligates \$21 million to MITRE Corporation in relation to TPPP work without explanation and likely in violation of congressional intent. HHS later acknowledges this was the same funding originally intended for Tier 1 awards.

December 2018

- [In letters to HHS Secretary Alex Azar](#), House and Senate Democrats voice concerns that HHS continues to violate federal court orders by directing funds in accordance with ideological goals favoring abstinence-only policies over evidence-based practices. The letters request information from HHS regarding its use of funding originally intended for TPPP Tier 1 grants.

January 2019

- [Democracy Forward Foundation files a new suit against HHS](#) for refusing to disclose information related to its potentially unlawful use of Tier 1 funds on the MITRE contract. The requested information would clarify whether HHS continues to violate congressional intent and federal court orders.
- House and Senate Democrats send a letter to CDC Director Robert Redfield requesting information regarding evidence supporting SMARTool. Funded by CDC's Division of Adolescent School Health (DASH), SMARTool was developed using abstinence-only programs despite its purpose of assessing sex education programs' effectiveness. SMARTool was referenced as an assessment tool in the April 2018 TPPP FOA.
- [Huber is appointed](#) Senior Policy Advisor for HHS' Office of Global Affairs. This positions her to impose sexual and reproductive health and rights restrictions and an abstinence-only-until-marriage agenda on the international community.