



## SEX ED FOR ALL MONTH: YOUTH POWER, INFORMATION, AND RIGHTS

### SUPPORT THE REAL EDUCATION FOR HEALTHY YOUTH ACT AND THE YOUTH ACCESS TO SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT

**Sex Ed For All Month: Youth Power, Information, and Rights** is about listening to young people. We're rebranding the month of May from *Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month* to **Sex Ed For All Month** to stop stigmatizing young parents and to recognize that young people need more than pregnancy prevention. We want to stand with all young people, so that they have the power and the right to access education and information on the full range of topics they need to achieve the best positive outcomes for themselves.

Too many young people in our nation aren't getting the information and skills they need to make informed sexual and reproductive health decisions -- but the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act (REHYA) and the Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act (YASHS) can help make **Sex Ed For All** a reality.

### REAL EDUCATION FOR HEALTHY YOUTH ACT (REHYA)

#### Young People Need and Have the Right to Quality Sexuality Education

Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA-13) are introducing REHYA, legislation that supports the health and well-being of young people by providing them with the comprehensive sex education they need to make informed and healthy decisions throughout their lives. Current federal investments in adolescent health promotion programs are an important step in the right direction, but much remains to be done to strengthen, enhance, and expand sex education efforts to meet the needs and rights of all young people.

The availability and quality of sexual health information and sex education varies drastically across the country. Less than 40% of all high schools and only 14% of middle schools in the U.S. provide all 19 of the CDC-identified topics critical to ensuring sexual health. ([CDC](#)) In addition, many young people face barriers to accessing health information and services, resulting in persistent inequity and health disparities. ([CDC](#))

#### REHYA Expands Quality Sex Education Across the Nation

- ✓ Establishes criteria and instruction topics—addressing human development; healthy relationships, personal skills, sexual behaviors including abstinence, contraception, and decision-making; sexual health; gender; and society and culture—by which sex education programs must adhere to receive federal funding and restricts funds for programs that fail to meet a minimum standard and responsiveness to the needs of young people;
- ✓ Creates grants for age-, developmentally, and culturally appropriate; medically accurate and complete; and evidence-informed comprehensive sex education for adolescents ages 10–19 and young people in institutions of higher education;

- ✓ Creates grants for professional development and teacher training for elementary and secondary education sex educators;
- ✓ Amends the *Public Health Service Act* and the *Every Student Succeeds Act* to enable education that does not stigmatize sex, is non-shaming of LGBTQ students, and is inclusive of contraceptive access in schools; and
- ✓ Eliminates and reprograms the Social Security Act Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage state grant program to fund the new comprehensive sex education and training grant programs.

## **YOUTH ACCESS TO SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT (YASHS)**

### **Youth Face Barriers Accessing Sexual Health Services**

Senator Mazie K. Hirono (D-HI) and Congresswoman Alma Adams (D-NC-12) are once again leading introduction of the YASHS Act, legislation that would provide grants to increase and improve the linkage and access of marginalized young people to sexual and reproductive health care and related services. Unfortunately, far too many young people in the United States face barriers—including stigma and discrimination, lack of knowledgeable providers, cost, transportation, and perceived lack of confidentiality—that prevent them from accessing recommended and necessary sexual health services. These barriers contribute to health challenges and disparities, as evidenced by the continued high rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancy among young people.

### **YASHS Bridges These Barriers By Supporting Partnerships and Programs That:**

- ✓ Equip young people with medically-accurate and complete, age-appropriate information and skills on how to access and obtain sexual health care and related services;
- ✓ Promote effective communication regarding sexual health;
- ✓ Promote and support better health, educational, and economic opportunities for young parents and families; and/or
- ✓ Train those working with young people to promote their sexual health and wellbeing.

### **YASHS Ensures that No Federal Funding Goes To Programs That:**

- ✗ Withhold health-promoting or life-saving information about sexuality-related topics;
- ✗ Are inaccurate or ineffective or promote gender stereotypes;
- ✗ Are insensitive and unresponsive to the needs of LGBTQ youth, sexually active youth, youth of varying abilities, school-age parents, or survivors of sexual assault and abuse;
- ✗ Are otherwise inconsistent with the ethical imperatives of medicine and public health.