

Society for Public Health Education

**RESOLUTION FOR THE PROMOTION OF
COMPREHENSIVE SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

Whereas, SOPHE recognizes that sexuality is a natural and healthy part of development and comprises biological, sociocultural, psychological, and spiritual dimensions (1-4) and,

Whereas, SOPHE recognizes the public health impact of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), HIV, and unintended pregnancy on teens and young adults and seeking to prevent these deleterious health risks and being committed to effectively educating the public so it has the knowledge to make informed decisions about health and

Whereas, the federal government funds abstinence only until marriage education which denies teens medically accurate information regarding contraception and enforces the view that the expected standard for human sexual activity is confined to the context of marriage (5) and

Whereas, comprehensive approaches to sexuality education that educate young people in the areas of abstinence, contraception and STI/HIV prevention are more effective at delaying the onset of sexual intercourse and increasing contraception use than those which teach abstinence as the only acceptable method of preventing STIs and unwanted pregnancies for young people (6) and

Whereas, there are no published studies in peer reviewed journals supporting the effectiveness of abstinence only until marriage programs (7) while there are numerous studies demonstrating that comprehensive sexuality education programs increase contraception use among young people who are sexually active and delay the onset of intercourse in those who are not sexually active (6,8) and

Whereas, research indicates that comprehensive sexuality education decreases the teenage pregnancy rate (8) and

Whereas, health educators who teach sexuality education are threatened with lawsuits and disciplined (9) for upholding the code of ethics of the profession (10) and

Whereas, the majority of American parents support medically accurate sexuality education that educates their children on all aspects of sexuality including contraception, safer sex practices, sexual orientation, and emotional and social skills needed for healthy sexual relationships (11) and

Whereas, one third of U.S. public school districts do not allow any positive information about contraception to be taught to students (12).

Now therefore be it resolved that SOPHE:

- (1) Support advocacy efforts for the passage of federal legislation that grants funds to programs that educate based on comprehensive, medically accurate sexuality education.
- (2) Increase public awareness of the importance of comprehensive sexuality education in schools.
- (3) Provide leadership in developing collaborations with other organizations and professional groups that support comprehensive sexuality education.
- (4) Insist on scientific evaluation of federal and state sexuality education programs to ensure their effectiveness in reducing teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates, increasing contraceptive use and delaying the onset of sexual intercourse.
- (5) Promote professional preparation standards to enhance training in sexuality education for teachers, including elementary and special education teachers.

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- (5) SIECUS. Exclusive purpose: Abstinence-only Proponents Create Federal Entitlement in Welfare Reform. SIECUS Report Articles. Vol. 24: (4). Article online: www.siecus.org/policy/SReport/srep0001.html.
- (6) Kirby, D. No Easy Answers: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy. The National Campaign to Prevent teen pregnancy. Washington DC. 1997
- (7) Kirby, D. Et Al. Evaluation of Education Now and Babies Later (ENABL): Final Report. University of California, School of Social Welfare, Family Welfare Research Group. Berkeley, Ca. 1995.
- (8) Paine-Andrews Et. Al. Effects of a Replication of a Multicomponent model for Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy in Three Kansas communities. Family Planning Perspectives. Jul-Aug, 1999. 31: (4) 182-9.
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- (10) Code of Ethics for the Health Education Professional. Journal of Health Education. Jul-Aug 2000. 31: (4).
- (11) Kaiser Family Foundation. Sex Education in America: A View from Inside the Nation's Classrooms. 2000. Menlo Park, Ca: The Kaiser Family Foundation.
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