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June 25, 2009

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Sex-Education Bill Heads to Governor's Desk
The Healthy Youth Act will help young people prevent unintended pregnancy and avoid STDs in North Carolina.

Raleigh, N.C. – Groundbreaking legislation that would bring comprehensive sex education to North Carolina students grades 7-9 now heads to Governor Perdue's desk to be signed after receiving final approval from the NC House today.

Planned Parenthood of North Carolina praised the leaders of the NC House and Senate who worked to pass The Healthy Youth Act (HB 88) through both chambers this legislative session. "Ninety-percent of North Carolina's parents have said that they want schools to teach comprehensive sex education that includes information on STDs and contraception. The Legislature has listened and given parents that option," said Paige Johnson, VP of Public Affairs and Communication for Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina.

North Carolina has the 9th highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation. As a result, it is estimated that North Carolina spends \$300 million annually on teenage pregnancy. Nearly all public schools in the state currently offer abstinence-only education, which has been deemed ineffective in published research studies.

Today the NC House voted 60-55 to concur with the Senate version of the Healthy Youth Act that passed that chamber earlier in the week. In the original version passed by the House, parents chose either an abstinence-only program or comprehensive sex education for their teen. Under the Senate version that was approved by the House today, school districts would be required to offer one sex education class that includes an abstinence-only component but also teaches comprehensive sex education including information on contraceptives and STD prevention. "This legislation is far superior to current law," said Melissa Reed, Vice President for Public Policy for Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Inc. "This means that comprehensive sex education will reach all 7th through 9th graders, and all school districts would be required to offer it."

The Health You Act now moves to Governor Perdue's desk to be signed into law. "We commend the North Carolina legislature for putting students' health above partisan politics and look forward to Governor Perdue's signature of this landmark legislation," Reed said. "The Healthy Youth Act is a bill which will provide our young people with scientifically-accurate information for lifelong healthy decision making. Under this law, most teens in North Carolina will now be given the lifesaving information they need to make smart, healthy decisions."

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