

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF ILLINOIS MARKS NATIONAL CONDOM WEEK BY URGING PARTNERS TO PROTECT THEIR SEXUAL HEALTH

Nearly 19 Million STIs Occur Each Year

CHICAGO, IL — In recognition of National Condom Week, Planned Parenthood of Illinois (PPIL) is urging sexually active individuals to talk to their partners about the importance of using condoms to protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Nearly 19 million STIs occur each year, and condoms are the only form of contraception that also helps reduce the risk of STIs.

“Planned Parenthood of Illinois is encouraging people to start a dialogue with their partners about condom use,” said Beth Kanter, Senior Vice President of External Affairs. “Many people who have an STI don’t even realize it. It’s important to let your partner know that you want to use condoms every time you have sex to keep both of you healthy.”

PPIL will be recognizing National Condom Week by giving away free condoms at all PPIL health centers across the state between February 14 - 21.

PPIL’s Teen Awareness Group (TAG) peer educators will also be sponsoring activities in local colleges and organizations to help foster discussion about condom use among sexual partners during National Condom Week. Among many activities, the teens will be distributing goody bags with condoms and STI information directly to their peers as well as hosting programs on healthy relationships.

The teens will also be utilizing popular social media accounts such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter to blitz fun, educational facts about condoms during National Condom Week.

“It is critical that young women, men and teens know how to protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies,” stated Kanter. “PPIL’s TAG educators are working hard to teach their peers about protection and prevention.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released its *Sexually Transmitted Disease Surveillance 2008*, which estimated that nearly 19 million STIs occur each year, nearly half of which are among 15 to 24-year-olds. Additionally, Illinois ranked 8th out of 50 states for the most gonorrhea cases in 2008 and 9th out of 50 states in chlamydia cases.

As a trusted health care provider, Planned Parenthood knows firsthand the power of education to help people make responsible decisions about their health. Every year we provide more than four million women, men, and teens nationwide with health information, services, and education to prevent STIs and unintended pregnancy.

PPIL’s peer educators are high school students who work as paid educators to lead one-on-one and group discussions in local schools and community organizations to educate other teens, parents and community members about making healthy decisions.

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Planned Parenthood of Illinois (PPIL) provides affordably priced high-quality reproductive health care services to women and families throughout Illinois. Through health care services, educational programs and advocacy efforts, PPIL works to ensure and protect the reproductive rights of each individual. For more information, visit www.ppil.org.