

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

ACLU of Illinois: Ed Yohnka 312-201-9740 x305

AFC: Maude Carroll 312-334-0913

ICAH: Soo Ji Min 312-671-0612

PPIL: Lara Philipps (o) 312-592-6820 (c) 312-622-6451

**Medically accurate, age-appropriate sexual health education
programs focus of new federal funding for Illinois**

CHICAGO – Thanks to action by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, the state will receive \$8.1 million in new federal funding for school and community-based comprehensive sexual health education programs in 2011.

“This is great news for youth in Illinois,” said Carole Brite, President and CEO of Planned Parenthood Illinois (PPIL). “Governor Quinn’s leadership will help ensure Illinois schools have funding to support evidence-based sexual health education programs that are age-appropriate and medically accurate.”

Although federal funding was also available for abstinence-only sex ed programs, Illinois did not apply for that funding, thanks to a decision made by Governor Pat Quinn.

“We thank Governor Quinn for doing the right thing for Illinois youth and rejecting funding for failed abstinence-only until marriage programs,” said Soo Ji Min, executive director of the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH). “All the evidence says abstinence-only programs just don’t work. In this economy, we need to make sure government funds are directed to effective interventions that deliver results.”

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced the awards Thursday, September 30. The Illinois Department of Human Services and Chicago Public Schools will receive the largest grants.

This new federal funding will allow wider implementation of age-appropriate programs that help youth to abstain from sex, but also teach proper use of condoms and birth control to reduce sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies.

“The classroom is a place for facts, not ideology,” said Lorie Chaiten, Director of the ACLU’s Reproductive Rights Project. “The best available evidence suggests that comprehensive sexual health education—tailored for particular ages—is the most effective way to provide critical information for youth. These programs offer accurate information and healthier futures for young people in Illinois.”

In 2009, 44 percent of Illinois female high school students and 52 percent of male high school students in the state reported that they had engaged in sexual intercourse,

according to the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance report. The teen pregnancy rate in Illinois ranks 22nd among U.S. states.

John Peller, Director of Government Relations for AIDS Foundation of Chicago, said, "The number of Illinois youth diagnosed with HIV/AIDS was rose nearly 150% from 2000 to 2008, from about 41 to 102. Funding for comprehensive sexual health education classes is a critical step towards making sure youth know and understand that abstinence and condom use are the best protection."

Two organizations, Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois and Demoiselle 2 Femme, received direct federal grants. ICAH and Planned Parenthood are subcontractors under the Chicago Public Schools grant. A full list of grantees and awards follows.

Chicago Public Schools, District #299	\$3,943,607
Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois	\$1,443,303
Illinois Department of Human Services	\$2,231,758
Demoiselle 2 Femme, NFP	\$555,701
TOTAL: \$8,174,369	

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AIDS Foundation of Chicago is a catalyst for local, national, and international action against HIV/AIDS. Learn more at www.aidschicago.org.

In partnership with youth, the *Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health* advocates for sound policies and practices that promote a positive approach to adolescent sexual health and parenting. Visit www.ica.org.

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.

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