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Editorials Across the Country Echo Planned Parenthood's Call for Comprehensive Sex Ed
Ask for end to ineffective and dangerous "abstinence-only" programs

On the heels of an alarming study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) showing that one in four teen girls has a sexually transmitted infection (STI), and that more than three million teenage girls have an STI, newspaper editorials from across the country have echoed Planned Parenthood Federation of America's call to end ineffective and dangerous "abstinence-only" programs.

In the last decade, more than \$1.5 billion has been wasted on abstinence-only programs that do nothing to teach our teens responsibility, and zero federal dollars have been spent on comprehensive sex education.

Planned Parenthood believes it's time to put money toward real solutions that will help prevent sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies among teenagers.

That's why Planned Parenthood is a leading advocate for education programs in America's schools that will keep teens healthy — by including information about abstinence as well as contraception, healthy communication, responsible decision making, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections.

Congress should put the right foot forward and immediately stop funding for dangerous abstinence-only programs that deny young people information about how to prevent pregnancy, protect their health and make responsible decisions.

A roundup of editorials calling for comprehensive sex education and prevention policies:

***Seattle Post Intelligencer* editorial: Sex Education: Basic health care.** "Not surprising, some experts say the unsettling numbers are the result of abstinence-only sex education. Not to be swayed by facts, the Bush administration continues increased funding for abstinence-only sex ed while freezing the funds for programs that truly work, such as Planned Parenthood clinics. This means teens have fewer places to go for discreet, free STD screenings and practical, medically based sex-ed information. It seems that simply telling teens to 'Just Say No' to sex until marriage doesn't work well (something we've known for some time, thanks to a 2007 study requested by Congress)." [\[http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/opinion/354752_stded.html\]](http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/opinion/354752_stded.html)

Baltimore Sun editorial: Too many infected teens. “The findings make it clear that abstinence-only curriculums funded by the Bush administration are simply not relevant to large numbers of sexually active teens.... What all teens, and arguably preteens, need is comprehensive sex education that gives them information about condom use and contraception and encourages them to stand up for themselves in relationships. These programs are generally most effective.”
[<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bal-ed.std13mar13.0.486638.story>]

The Enquirer (Cincinnati) editorial: The 'talk': birds, bees, disease. “Education is the first, best weapon in attacking this growing public health crisis. Parents need to talk to their children about the wisdom of abstaining from sex, about STDs, contraception and responsible decision-making. Schools need to put comprehensive health education back into the curriculum.”
[<http://news.enquirer.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080313/EDIT01/803130311/1090/EDIT>]

Roanoke Times editorial: Abstinence works only if practiced. “After a decade of decline in teen sex, since 2001 and the ideologically driven push for abstinence-only education, the number of teens having sex is on the rise. So, too, are teen birth rates. At least Virginia is no longer subscribing to this unhealthy program. Last fall, Gov. Tim Kaine used the state budget crunch to eliminate matching funds for a state-sponsored abstinence-only program.... Sex education should teach children how to prevent becoming pregnant before they're ready to be parents and how to stay healthy so they can be parents when they are ready.”
[<http://www.roanoke.com/editorials/wb/154379>]

News Journal (Wilmington, DE) editorial: Teenagers' exposure to sexual diseases isn't treatable with denial. “If anyone still thinks America's head-in-the-sand approach to sex education works, just take a look at a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.... Part of the solution is better information about sex, better screening for disease, and more prevention measures. But that's easier said than done. For too long, sex education has been caught in the continuing cultural war over sex. The CDC survey indicates the ‘just say no’ approach is failing.”
[<http://www.delawareonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080313/OPINION11/803130320/1112/OPINION>]

Tucson Citizen editorial: Girls' risks, STD rates too high. “A shocking new finding - that 1 in 4 teenage girls has a sexually transmitted disease - is one of the best arguments in a long while for safe-sex education.” [<http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/daily/opinion/79486.php>]

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Planned Parenthood of Northeast Ohio is a recent consolidation of Planned Parenthood of Greater Cleveland, Planned Parenthood of North Central Ohio, Planned Parenthood of Stark County, Planned Parenthood of Summit, Portage and Medina Counties, and Planned Parenthood of the Mahoning