

## The Campaign to Reject Funding for Title V “Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage” Programs

We are elected officials, public health administrators, legislators, social workers, nurses, and doctors. We are also parents, teachers, grandparents, and students.

We are all citizens of Illinois who believe that young people should receive medically accurate, age appropriate education about their sexual and reproductive health. Although sexual health education can equip young people to make responsible choices to be healthy lifelong learners, Illinois does not provide public support to bring these programs to our youth.

However, Illinois currently receives \$1.8 million in Title V funds from the federal government to support Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage programs. These funds are highly restrictive and deny young people critical information for them to make wise decisions for their lifelong health. These programs are insufficient, inaccurate, and ineffective.

- \* Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage programs deny young people access to critical health information which could help them make healthy decisions. By federal law, these programs cannot discuss the health benefits of using condoms and contraceptives. These programs often distort the failure rates of condoms in order to promote abstinence as the only viable choice. Young people often leave confused, assuming that using a condom is pointless.

- \* Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage programs frequently exclude information about the prevention, testing, and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). This is of particular concern for health disparities in communities of color, where young people experience higher rates of STIs.

- \* Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage curricula have been repeatedly proven to be ineffective. A Congressionally mandated evaluation of federally funded programs showed that these programs had no impact on student behavior, while study after study show that more comprehensive programs delay the onset of sexual activity and increase healthy behaviors for students when they become sexually active.

Our young people are too valuable to us, and our tax dollars too limited to waste on abstinence only programs.

***We Call On Illinois to Reject Title V “Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage” Funding!***

In Support,

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