End Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Public Education Programs

WHEREAS the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Policy on Adolescent Health Care, Sexuality and Contraception states the AAFP “is concerned about the sexual health of adolescents in the United States, particularly in regard to the high incidence of teenage pregnancies, the high rate of sexually transmitted diseases and the lack of effective sex education programs,” and

WHEREAS, the AAFP Congress of Delegates passed Resolution 405 in 2005 and updated this policy to state, in addition, that “The AAFP believes that an evidence-based, comprehensive approach to sexuality education will be effective in reducing unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.” and

WHEREAS, the resolution above also updated Recommendation A of the AAFP Policy on Adolescent Health Care, Sexuality and Contraception to state that the AAFP “defines effective sexuality education, pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted disease prevention programs as those using a comprehensive approach to sexuality education that includes medically accurate information on contraception and abstinence, and

WHEREAS, Recommendation D of the AAFP Policy on Adolescent Health Care, Sexuality and Contraception states, that family physicians should be “actively involved in community efforts in initiating and implementing effective education and prevention programs for unintended teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The AAFP supports health education programs in the elementary to high schools to include age appropriate sex education,” and

WHEREAS, the AAFP Policy on Health Education states that “Students at all levels should be provided opportunities to obtain accurate information on health, illness and illness prevention, obtain information on health topics most relevant to the student population, such as substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases,” and

WHEREAS, a 2007 study commissioned by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy which examined 48 comprehensive sex education programs as well as abstinence-only-until marriage programs found that “there does not exist any strong evidence that any abstinence-only education program delays the initiation of sex, hastens the return to abstinence or reduces the number of sexual partners.” In fact the only programs that delayed sexual initiation were comprehensive sex education programs, (CITE) and

WHEREAS, in a 2004 report released by Representative Henry A. Waxman (CITE), over 80 percent of the federally funded abstinence-only-until marriage programs evaluated were using curricula that rely on medically inaccurate information on the effectiveness of contraceptives and condoms and the risks of abortion, as well as gender stereotypes and religious messages, and

WHEREAS the American Medical Association (AMA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Society for Adolescent Medicine (SAM) and American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists (ACOG) have official policy statements urging schools to implement comprehensive sexuality education programs and/or criticizing abstinence-only programs as inaccurate and ineffective,1,2,5,4 and the AAP states “abstinence-only programs have not demonstrated successful outcomes with regard to delayed initiation of sexual activity or safer sex practices” 4
WHEREAS, for fiscal year 2007 the Federal Government allocated $176 million for abstinence-only until marriage programs via three funding streams and the expected level of this funding for 2008 is $204 million, (CITE) and

WHEREAS, states accepting any part of the $50 million stream available annually through the Title V of the Social Security Act agree to match these funds at a rate of $3 for every Federal $4 providing an additional $37.5 million annually, (CITE) and

WHEREAS, 13 states currently reject the funds offered by Title V of the Social Security Act for funding abstinence only until marriage programs, (AK, AZ, CA, CT, IL, MA, MN, MT, NJ, NM, OR, VT, and WV)

BE IT RESOLVED, the CAFP use its lobbyists to advocate for California to refuse future funding for abstinence-only-until marriage programs, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CAFP encourages the AAFP to support state academies in advocating for others states to refuse funds earmarked for abstinence-only-until marriage programs,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CAFP asks the AAFP to draft a letter opposing federal funding abstinence-only-until marriage programs to be delivered to the Administration for Children’s Services and Health and Human Service Administration, which currently overseas these funding streams, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the CAFP present this resolution to the 2008/2009 Congress of Delegates of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

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(refs need updating)


3 Society for Adolescent Medicine. Position Statements on Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents: Sex Education. Available at: http://www.adolescenthealth.org/reproductive_health_.htm#position
