



SOUTH DAKOTA

South Dakota received at least \$973,572 in federal funds for abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in Fiscal Year 2006.¹

South Dakota Sexuality Education Law and Policy

South Dakota law does not require schools to teach sexuality education. Instead, the decision is left up to local school boards. However, schools are required to teach “character development instruction,” which includes sexual abstinence.

The *South Dakota Health Education Standards* includes HIV/STD prevention in grades seven through twelve. The state does not require a specific curriculum.

South Dakota does not require parental permission for students to participate in sexuality or HIV/AIDS education nor does it say whether parents or guardians can remove their children from such classes.

See South Dakota Statute 13-33-6.1 and the *South Dakota Health Education Standards*.

Recent Legislation

Legislation Places Strict Restrictions on School Instruction

House Bill 1217 would place numerous restrictions on what is taught about sexuality in schools. Instruction would have to follow an abstinence-only-until-marriage model and could not follow models of instruction based on risk reduction, including “encouraging, promoting, and providing instruction in the use of contraceptive drugs, devices, or methods.” Such instruction would also have to “inform students that engaging in unlawful sexual activity may be a crime punishable by law.” School districts would be required to create an advisory board with the majority of members being parents who have children currently in the school district. The bill was introduced in January 2006, passed the House, and then died in the Senate.

Bill Requires Balanced Instruction in Human Sexuality

Senate Bill 196, introduced in January 2006 and assigned to the Senate Committee on Education, would require public school students in grades six through eight to receive instruction on human sexuality. This instruction must be age-appropriate, medically accurate, emphasize abstinence, and include information about the advantages and disadvantages of contraception.

Events of Note

Sioux Falls School Board Approves New Sexuality Curriculum and Materials

July 2006; Sioux Falls, SD

After several months of debate, the Sioux Falls School Board approved changes to the sexual health curriculum for middle school students. The revisions stress abstinence but include information about contraception.

The controversy began when a new curriculum about healthy living and disease prevention, and materials that supported the changes, were proposed to the school board. Parents complained that both the curriculum and the materials were sexually graphic and not age-appropriate, and that there was no clear definition of abstinence in the lessons.² In response, the school board formed two committees, one to propose curriculum changes and one to recommend materials for the revised curriculum.

In March 2006, the board reviewed and accepted the curriculum committee's suggestions. In the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, lessons will emphasize abstinence and discuss conception, the consequences of sexual activity, and the influence of the media. Contraception will be introduced starting in the seventh grade. Most important to the community, the new curriculum defined abstinence as "the practice of choosing not to be sexually active." The Assistant Superintendent of the School District voiced his acceptance of the revisions, stating, "Certainly bodies are changing and people are developing new awareness and so forth and so we want them to be knowledgeable about that so they can make a decision and not make poor decisions that hurt them in their health."³

Some parents, however, voiced their concerns that the materials placed too much emphasis on contraception and that they were, again, not age-appropriate. "The emphasis should be on how to eliminate the risky behaviors, therefore, prevent sex in our students. The only way to do this is abstinence," said one parent.⁴ Another parent was worried about the supplemental materials teachers may use. In response, an official from the school district said, "I have total trust in their [the teachers'] ability to determine what is appropriate for students of that age."⁵ The board expressed no intention of changing its decision.

Sex Education Plays Interesting Role in School Board Election in South Dakota

April 2005; Sioux Falls, SD

In a forum held among the six candidates for Sioux Falls School Board, only two candidates wholeheartedly said sexuality education should be part of public education, while one candidate said it should not be taught at all.

One candidate, John Stratman, argued that if sexuality education is taught, abstinence should be an integral part of the lesson. Interestingly, Stratman is on the board of directors of both the Abstinence Clearinghouse and the Alpha Center, a crisis pregnancy center, both of which are run by abstinence-only leader Leslee Unruh.⁶ Unruh and her husband donated money to Stratman's campaign. In addition, the anti-choice Alpha Center wrote about Stratman in its online newsletter stating that, "Mr. Stratman is a strong proponent of parents' rights and traditional values, including abstinence education....His election to the school board would ensure a strong voice for the safety and well-being of our children."

One local newspaper suggested that such a mention seemed to blur the lines of election laws. The relevant statute states, "No association or corporation can contribute or attempt to contribute any valuable consideration to any candidate."⁷ Stratman lost to incumbent Debbie Hoffman.

South Dakota's Youth: Statistical Information of Note⁸

- In 2005, 47% of female high school students and 41% of male high school students in South Dakota reported ever having had sexual intercourse compared to 46% of female high school students and 48% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 4% of female high school students and 8% of male high school students in South Dakota reported having had sexual intercourse before age 13 compared to 4% of female high school students and 9% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 17% of female high school students and 12% of male high school students in South Dakota reported having had four or more lifetime sexual partners compared to 12% of female high school students and 17% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, 34% of female high school students and 29% of male high school students in South Dakota reported being currently sexually active (defined as having had sexual intercourse in the three months prior to the survey) compared to 35% of female high school students and 33% of male high school students nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 54% of females and 61% of males in South Dakota reported having used condoms the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 56% of females and 70% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 21% of females and 19% of males in South Dakota reported having used birth control pills the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 21% of females and 15% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, among those high school students who reported being currently sexually active, 26% of females and 36% of males in South Dakota reported having used alcohol or drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse compared to 19% of females and 28% of males nationwide.
- In 2005, 86% of high school students in South Dakota reported having been taught about AIDS/HIV in school compared to 88% of high school students nationwide.
- In 2003, teens ages 15–19 accounted for 39% of the 2,606 total cases of Chlamydia reported in South Dakota.⁹
- In 2003, teens ages 15–19 accounted for 28% of the 226 total cases of gonorrhea reported in South Dakota.¹⁰
- In 2000, South Dakota's abortion rate was 7 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen abortion rate of 24 per 1,000 nationwide.¹¹
- In 2004, South Dakota's birth rate was 39 per 1,000 women ages 15–19 compared to a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 nationwide.¹²

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding

South Dakota received \$136,379 in federal Title V funding in Fiscal Year 2006. The Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage grant requires states to provide three state-raised dollars or the equivalent in services for every four federal dollars received. The state match may be provided in part or in full by local organizations. South Dakota provides \$15,575 in state funds, and the remainder of the match is provided by sub-grantees. The South Dakota Department of Health oversees the funding.

The goal of the Department of Health's Abstinence Education Program is to reduce teen pregnancies and the physical and psychological health risks that accompany early sexual activity.¹³

There are four sub-grantees: the Abstinence Clearinghouse, Bethany Christian Services, Care Net Pregnancy Resource Center, and the Northern Hills Pregnancy Center.

The Abstinence Clearinghouse was founded in 1997 by Leslee Unruh. The organization's mission is to "promote the appreciation for and practice of sexual abstinence (purity) through the distribution of age-appropriate, factual and medically-accurate materials."¹⁴ The Abstinence Clearinghouse's medical advisory board is comprised of over 60 health professionals who do not promote or prescribe contraception for unmarried teens.¹⁵ The Abstinence Clearinghouse is also tied to the Alpha Center, a crisis pregnancy center that Unruh founded in 1984.

Over the years, the Abstinence Clearinghouse and Ms. Unruh have been accused of misconduct in several cases. In 1987, Unruh was investigated by authorities after being accused of persuading young women to carry their pregnancies to term and give their babies up for adoption in exchange for money. Unruh's crisis pregnancy center, The Alpha Center, pleaded "no contest" to a handful of charges, and paid a \$500 fine as part of a plea bargain in which 19 charges, including four felonies, were dropped.¹⁶ In 2005, Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA), asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to investigate the Abstinence Clearinghouse's \$2.7 million contract with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to review abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula. Waxman noted that the Abstinence Clearinghouse has "a strong ideological bias and a history of ignoring scientific evidence that challenges its positions" and suggested that the organization "appears to have a significant conflict of interest because it earns fees from abstinence-only resource providers whose curricula it is being asked to evaluate."¹⁷ Most recently, in July 2006, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) filed an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) complaint against the Alpha Center and the Abstinence Clearinghouse. The complaint suggests that the organizations have violated federal tax law by failing to report on lobbying efforts and endorsing candidates. The IRS complaint outlines several examples of violations, including Unruh's efforts to lobby lawmakers on behalf of a South Dakota law, authored by Unruh herself, that would have banned all abortions in the state.¹⁸

Unruh was honored recently with the "2006 Malachi Woman of the Year Award" for "her work in spearheading the controversial South Dakota abortion ban."¹⁹ She was given the mark of distinction by Operation Rescue, an organization that has a history of staging massive blockades in front of reproductive health clinics and whose members have historically provoked, supported, and committed violence against abortion providers and clinics.²⁰

Unruh reportedly has had personal conversations with President Bush on a number of occasions and he appeared in a pre-recorded video spot with a message of support at the Abstinence Clearinghouse's annual conference in 2006.²¹ Since George W. Bush took office, the Abstinence Clearinghouse and the Alpha Center, under Unruh's leadership, have received millions in federal abstinence-only-until-marriage funding. (See the CBAE and AFLA section for more information on the Alpha Center.)

The Abstinence Clearinghouse implements the abstinence-only-until-marriage program "Truth for Youth," primarily across eastern South Dakota. Recently, though, the program expanded to serve more rural areas as well as Native American reservations. The "Truth for Youth" team will work with approximately 2,000 students, 400 parents, and 60 teachers by 2008.²² The Abstinence Clearinghouse

takes positions on numerous topics related to sexuality and sexuality education. For example, the organization states its position on sexual orientation:

Research shows the homosexual lifestyle is not a healthy alternative for males or females. The male and female bodies are not anatomically suited to accommodate sexual relations with members of the same sex. Sexual practices in the homosexual lifestyle are considered very dangerous for disease, infection, etc. This lifestyle should not be encouraged as healthy or as an equal alternative to marriage.²³

In addition, the organization states that sexuality education should not include images of external genitalia:

Diagrams of internal organs are acceptable, but images or pictures of external genitalia in any form, whether diseased or healthy, can be determined (sic) to the health of young men and women's minds.²⁴

Care Net Pregnancy Resource Center is an affiliate of Stop and Think South Dakota. Stop and Think certifies its affiliates to use one or more of its three curricula: *DECISION*, which is geared towards junior high students; *REALITY*, which is geared towards high school students; and *LISTEN*, which is geared towards parents and teachers.²⁵ Certified organizations then present the Stop and Think programs by conducting classroom presentations in junior high schools, small group presentations in high schools, and parent outreach.²⁶

Care Net is certified by Stop and Think to use the *REALITY* and *LISTEN* curricula. Care Net hosts monthly after-school events for young people in targeted towns throughout the state. Its service area includes nine communities in western South Dakota.

Bethany Christian Services uses a program called “Teen Legacy,” which targets 53 school districts in 23 counties across the state. Teen Legacy seeks to “nurture a generation of youth who make healthy and responsible choices by revealing the truth about premarital sexual activity and its consequences, teaching teens how to resist pressures, and focusing on how abstinence until marriage will protect and enhance their relationships and futures.”²⁷ Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany Christian Services describes itself as, “a not-for-profit, pro-life, Christian adoption and family services agency.” Its mission statement announces, “Bethany Christian Services manifests the love and compassion of Jesus Christ by protecting and enhancing the lives of children and families through quality social services.”²⁸ The program targets students in grades seven through twelve and uses *A.C. Green's Game Plan*, *Navigator*, and *No Apologies: The Truth About Life, Love, and Sex*.

SIECUS reviewed *Game Plan* and found that in order to convince high school students to remain abstinent until marriage, the curriculum relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and family structure. In addition, *Game Plan* fails to provide important information on sexual health, including how students can seek testing and treatment if they suspect they have an STD. Finally, the format and underlying biases of the curriculum do not allow for cultural, community, and individual values, and discourage critical thinking and discussions of alternate points of view in the classroom. For example, *Game Plan* states that “even if you’ve been sexually active, it’s never too late to say no. You can’t go back, but you can go forward. You might feel guilty or untrustworthy, but you can start over again.”²⁹

SIECUS reviewed *Navigator* and found that it relies on messages of fear and shame, inaccurate and misleading information, and biased views of marriage, sexual orientation, and pregnancy options. *Navigator* fails to provide important information on sexual health, and the format and underlying biases of the curriculum dictate specific values and discourage critical thinking. For

example, the authors explain that “Navigator does not promote the use of contraceptives for teens. No contraceptive device is guaranteed to prevent pregnancy. Besides, students who do not exercise self-control to remain abstinent are not likely to exercise self-control in the use of a contraceptive device.”³⁰

Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) and Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA) Grantees

There are two CBAE grantees in South Dakota: the Alpha Center and the Northern Hills Pregnancy Center. There is one AFLA grantee in South Dakota: Rural American Initiative.

The Alpha Center is a crisis pregnancy center that was founded and is run by Leslee Unruh, founder of the Abstinence Clearinghouse. (See the Title V section for more information on the Abstinence Clearinghouse.) Crisis pregnancy centers typically advertise as providing medical services and then use anti-choice propaganda, misinformation, and fear and shame tactics to dissuade women facing unintended pregnancy from exercising their right to choose.

The Alpha Center provides abstinence programs (including “Lady in Waiting” and “The Bride Wore White”) to churches and schools, pregnancy testing, post-abortion counseling, parenting classes, a speakers bureau, medical agency referrals, relationship counseling, a resource library, and sponsors events such as *God, Mom & Me Teas* and the *Memorial for the Unborn*.³¹ According to the Alpha Center’s website, “Lady in Waiting” and “The Bride Wore White” are studies that “incorporate a Biblical perspective on the importance of purity.”³²

The Alpha Center’s website contains misinformation about many topics, including STDs and condom effectiveness. Under the “Answers” section of the website, a chart lists the STDs gonorrhea, syphilis, Chlamydia, herpes simplex, AIDS, Hepatitis B, human papillomavirus, and molluscum contagiosum. For each of the listed STDs, “Condom Effectiveness” is stated as “no proven protection,” “not effective,” or some variation of this.³³ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Latex condoms, when used consistently and correctly, are highly effective in preventing the transmission of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. In addition, correct and consistent use of latex condoms can reduce the risk of other STDs.” The CDC goes on to specify that when used consistently and correctly condoms can reduce the risk of transmission of gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and trichomoniasis as well as genital herpes, syphilis, chancroid, and HPV “only when the infected areas are covered or protected by the condom.” Finally, the CDC explains that the use of latex condoms has been associated with a reduction in risk of HPV-associated diseases, such as cervical cancer.³⁴ In fact, according to a University of Washington study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, consistent condom use can cut a woman’s risk of infection by 70 percent and protect her from developing precancerous cervical changes.³⁵

The Alpha Center also posts misinformation about abortion and contraception on its website. The website mislabels emergency contraception (EC), or the morning-after pill, as a form of abortion, stating that when a woman takes EC, “the tiny baby will die before he or she can actually attach to the lining of the uterus... This is called a chemical abortion.”³⁶ In fact, emergency contraception is a high dose of regular birth control pills that can reduce a woman’s chance of becoming pregnant by 75 to 89 percent if taken within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse. Many people confuse EC with the RU-486 or mifepristone, often called the “abortion pill.” EC is not the same thing and cannot end an established pregnancy. EC works by delaying or inhibiting ovulation or inhibiting implantation. If an egg has already implanted in a woman’s uterus, EC will not terminate the pregnancy nor will it harm the developing fetus. In fact, research suggests that the availability of EC has led to a decrease in abortions. According to the Guttmacher Institute,

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emergency contraceptives accounted for up to 43% of the decrease in total abortions between 1994 and 2000, and an estimated 51,000 abortions were averted by women's use of emergency contraceptives in 2000 alone.³⁷

The Alpha Center advertises ultrasounds to give "you the opportunity to verify that you have a viable pregnancy and also a chance to see what is happening inside your body."³⁸ According to its website, "the need for an ultrasound is determined by a lay counselor" rather than medical staff.³⁹ The American Institute of Ultrasound in Medicine (AIUM), Society for Diagnostic Medical Sonography (SDMS), American College of Radiology (ACR) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) all discourage the use of ultrasound machines for the non-medical, non-diagnostic purpose of manipulating a patient's decision.⁴⁰

This website contains additional misleading and judgmental information about abstinence. For example, under the "Let's Talk About Sex" section of "Answers," the website advises young women to remain abstinent until marriage because "nobody wants to marry someone who has been the loving, meaningful relationship of 17 other guys."⁴¹

Northern Hills Pregnancy Care Center is also an affiliate of Stop and Think.⁴² It conducts abstinence-only-until-marriage programs in ten communities in the Northern Hills, SD area. (See the Title V section for more information on the Stop and Think program.)

The Northern Hills Pregnancy Care Center's website includes biased information about abortion procedures, such as, "each procedure is painful for both the mother and her unborn baby." When discussing the most common abortion procedure, known as a "D & C," the website reads, "after the cervix is dilated, a suction machine nearly thirty times more powerful than a vacuum cleaner dismembers and removes the baby."⁴³ This is not a medically accurate account of the procedure, and is clearly meant to invoke guilt and fear.

Federal and State Funding for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs in FY 2006

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
South Dakota Department of Health www.state.sd.us/DOH	\$136,379 federal \$15,575	Title V
Abstinence Clearinghouse www.abstinence.net	\$27,000	Title V sub-grantee
Bethany Christian Services www.bethany.org	\$26,500	Title V sub-grantee

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Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Grantee Length of Grant	Amount of Grant	Type of Grant (includes Title V, CBAE, AFLA, and other funds)
Care Net Pregnancy Resource Center	\$40,048	Title V sub-grantee
Northern Hills Pregnancy Center	\$24,291	Title V sub-grantee
DUAL GRANTEE 2005–2008	\$317,231	CBAE
Alpha Center 2004–2007 www.alphacenter.org	\$294,962	CBAE
Rural American Initiatives 2002–2007	\$225,000	AFLA

Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Coordinator

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South Dakota Organizations that Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

ACLU of the Dakotas
112 North University Dr., Suite 301
Manchester Building
Fargo, ND 58102
Phone: (701) 461-7290
www.acludakotas.org

NARAL Pro-Choice South Dakota
401 East 8th St., Suite 330G
Sioux Falls, SD 57103
Phone: (605) 334-5065
www.prochoicesd.org

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Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, North
Dakota, South Dakota
1965 Ford Pkwy.
St. Paul, MN 55116
Phone: (612) 825-2777
www.ppmns.org

South Dakota Organizations that Oppose Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Abstinence Clearinghouse
801 East 41st St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Phone: (605) 335-3643
www.abstinence.net

Catholic Social Services
918 5th St.
Rapid City, SD 57701
Phone: (605) 348-6086
www.catholic-social-services.net

South Dakota Family Policy Council
3500 South Phillips Ave., Suite 110
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Phone: (605) 335-8100
www.sdfamily.org

South Dakota Right to Life
P.O. Box 1032
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: (605) 224-9181
www.sdril.org

Newspapers in South Dakota

Aberdeen American News
Medical/Health Editor
124 S. 2nd St.
Aberdeen, SD 57401
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Argus Leader
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¹ This refers to the fiscal year for the federal government which begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. The fiscal year is designated by the calendar year in which it ends; for example, Fiscal Year 2006 begins on October 1, 2005 and ends on September 30, 2006.

² Jim Brown, "Sioux Falls Parents' Advocate Urges Abstinence Based Sex Ed Curriculum," *Agape Press*, 24 January 2006, accessed <<http://headlines.agapepress.org/archive/1/242006e.asp>>.

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⁷ Brenda Wade Schmidt, "Alpha Center Assists Candidate," *Argus Leader*, 3 May 2005, 1A.

⁸ Unless otherwise cited, all statistical information comes from Danice K. Eaton, et al., "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005," *Surveillance Summaries, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, vol. 55, no. SS-5 (9 June 2006): 1-108, accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>>.

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¹⁰ *Sexually Transmitted Disease Statistics: Gonorrhea by Age and Gender, 2003*, South Dakota Department of Health, Office of Disease Prevention, (3 February 2005), accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.state.sd.us/doh/Disease/stdstats.htm>>.

¹¹ U.S. *Teenage Pregnancy Statistics: Overall Trends, Trends by Race and Ethnicity and State-by-State Information* (New York: The Guttmacher Institute, February 2004), accessed 26 January 2007, <<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2006/09/12/USTPstats.pdf>>.

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¹³ "Abstinence Education Program," South Dakota Department of Health, (2007), accessed 31 January 2007, <<http://www.state.sd.us/DOH/Abstinence/index.htm>>.

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¹⁵ Myra Batchelder, "Who Is Leslee Unruh?," 5 October 2006, accessed 13 February 2007, <<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/news-articles-press/politics-policy-issues/abortion-access/leslee-unruh-6248.htm>>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Danielle Knight, "Bias Claimed in U.S. Abstinence-Only Review," *US News and World Report*, 8 October 2005, accessed 13 February 2007, <<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/051008/8waxman.htm>>.

¹⁸ "CREW Files IRS Complaint Against Anti-Choice Abstinence-only Orgs—Alpha Center and National Abstinence Clearinghouse," Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, Press Release published 26 July 2006, accessed 13 February 2007, <<http://www.citizensforethics.org/press/newsrelease.php?view=141>>.

¹⁹ "Operation Rescue Announces 2006 Recipients of the Malachi Man and Woman of the Year Awards," Operation Rescue, accessed 13 February 2007, <<http://www.operationrescue.org/?p=526>>.

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- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ “Answers,” Alpha Center (2006), accessed 24 January 2007, <<http://www.alphacenter.org/answers/std.php>>.
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