

Appendix A

Medically Accurate Sex Education Talking Points

The following are talking points for you to use in discussing this issue with the press, school officials, and potential coalition partners.

Abstinence-Only until marriage programs do not work. Not only are they ineffective, they're actively harmful.

- AOUM programs have no measurable impact on sexual behaviors, including on delaying sexual intercourse, reducing the number of partners, or facilitating “secondary abstinence” (i.e. encouraging students who were already sexually active to cease sexual intercourse after participating in the program).
- Adolescents who took “virginity pledges” were found to have higher rates of sexually transmitted infections and non-marital pregnancies than those who did not. When students who intend to abstain fail to do so, they are less likely to use condoms or other forms of contraception to protect themselves.

AOUM curricula are full of false, misleading, or incomplete information. Students deserve the facts.

- These include false claims about failure rates for condoms for STI prevention and contraception. Some AOUM programs claim that condoms do not prevent transmission of HIV or other infections and fail to prevent pregnancy as often as 15% of the time. Actual annual failure rates for perfect usage are about 2%.
- These programs often reinforce gender stereotypes (woman are vulnerable, men are aggressive, women should be kept “pure” for marriage, etc.) and exclude information for LGBT students.
- Programs include false information about transmission of HIV (that infection is possible through sweat or tears, that condoms fail to prevent HIV transmission 31% of the time), abortion (that women who have an abortion are more likely to commit suicide and that 10% of women who have abortions become sterile), and effectiveness of the program itself.

More than 85% of parents and almost all students favor comprehensive sex education over abstinence-only approaches.

- 95%+ of Americans want students to be taught about HIV/AIDS and other STIs, including how to reduce risks and get tested.
- 85% want students to know how to use condoms.
- 71% want students to know they can obtain birth control pills from their doctor or a clinic on their own.

Every single reputable medical organization backs comprehensive and medically accurate sex education and says that abstinence-only until marriage curricula are harmful.

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Medical Association
- The American Psychological Association
- The American Public Health Association
- The Institute of Medicine
- The Society for Adolescent Medicine
- The American Foundation for AIDS Research
- The National Education Association
- The American School Health Association