

Why the Affordable Care Act Matters for Women: Comprehensive Sex Education for Teens

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Over the last few decades, significantly more federal funding has been dedicated to abstinence-only-until-marriage programs than to comprehensive approaches to sex education. Prior to 2010, federal funding for sex education was restricted to abstinence-only-until-marriage education; from 1996 to 2008, Congress funneled more than \$1.5 billion to these unproven and ineffective programs. Although the government began funding comprehensive sex education in 2010, it is unfortunate that abstinence-only funding continues as well.

Abstinence-only education has not been shown to reduce teen sexual activity, pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It does not provide young people who choose to become sexually active with the tools they need to avoid pregnancy and stay safe. Moreover, abstinence-only education tends to encourage stereotypes about girls and boys and ignore the sexual health needs of LGBT teens. All young people are entitled to comprehensive sexuality education that meets their needs when and if they choose to become sexually active.

Why the ACA Matters for Women Fact Sheets

- ▶ Summary of Key Provisions ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Requirement to Have Health Insurance ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Health Insurance Marketplaces ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Affordability and Choice in the Insurance Marketplace ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Expanding Access to Health Insurance ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Premium and Cost Sharing Assistance ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Improving Health Care for Older Women ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Improving Health Care for Women of Color ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Improving Health Coverage for Lower-Income Women ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Better Care for Pregnant Women and Mothers ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Coverage for Lower and Moderate Income Pregnant Women ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Expanding Medicaid Family Planning Services ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Preserving Access to Women's Health Clinics ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Comprehensive Sex Education for Teens ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Restrictions on Abortion Coverage ([pdf](#))
 - ▶ Health IT: The Foundation for Health Reform ([pdf](#))
- Also available at www.nationalpartnership.org

New Funds for Comprehensive Sexuality Education

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) supports evidence-based, medically accurate, comprehensive sexuality education. Unfortunately, it also includes funding for abstinence-only programs.

- ▶ The ACA provided \$75 million per year for five years to the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP), a state grant program to fund comprehensive approaches to sex education. Specifically, PREP funds evidence-based, medically accurate, age-appropriate programs to educate adolescents about both abstinence and contraception

in order to prevent unintended teen pregnancy and STIs, including HIV/AIDS. In a package of bills passed in March 2014, Congress extended PREP program funding through FY 2015.

- ▶ In FY 2012¹ and 2013², the Obama administration awarded PREP grants to 45 states, the District of Columbia and three U.S. territories. Additionally, PREP grants were awarded to 37 community-based, faith-based, and local entities that were located in the five states that did not apply to the state grant competition.
- ▶ Unfortunately, both the ACA and the package of bills that extended PREP through FY 2015 also reinstated the Title V abstinence-only-until-marriage program – an unsuccessful program that directs \$50 million a year to states to spend on abstinence-only-until-marriage programs. The National Partnership and the reproductive health community strongly oppose continued funding for abstinence-only education because it denies young people the information they need to avoid pregnancy and stay safe.

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Family and Youth Service Bureau (April 2012). Personal Responsibility Education Program Fact Sheet. Retrieved July 8, 2013 at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/prep-fact-sheet>

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Family and Youth Service Bureau (November 2012). 2013 State Personal Responsibility Education Program Grant Awards. Retrieved July 8, 2013 at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/resource/prep-2013>