

Resolution to Support Comprehensive Sexuality Education

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 a recommendation 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 December 2004 report by Representative Henry Waxman and the Committee on Gov’t Reform found that “Abstinence-only curricula contain false information about the effectiveness of contraceptives, and risks of abortion. Abstinence- only curricula blur religion and science, treat stereotypes about girls and boys as scientific fact and contain scientific errors,¹” and

WHEREAS the UN Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS concludes that comprehensive sexuality education programs can delay the onset of sexual activity, reduce the number of sexual partners among sexually active youth, and reduce the rates of unintended pregnancy and STDs,² 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,^{3,4,5,6,7} 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 now therefore be it

RESOLVED that the AAFP add to its recommendations for Adolescent Health Care, Sexuality and Contraception, that the AAFP defines effective sexuality education and pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease prevention programs as those using a comprehensive approach to sexuality education that includes medically accurate information on contraception *and* abstinence. The AAFP believes that this approach to sexuality education has been proven effective in reducing unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, and further be it

RESOLVED that the NYSAFP pass this resolution on to the 2005 Congress of Delegates of the American Academy of Family Physicians.

¹ United States House of Representatives. Committee on Government Reform-Minority Staff. Special Investigations Division. Prepared for Rep. Henry A. Waxman. The Content of Federally Funded Abstinence-Only Education Programs. December 2004. Available at <http://www.democrats.reform.house.gov/Documents/20041201102153-50247.pdf>

² Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, "Sexual Health Education Does Lead to Safer Sexual Behavior," press release, October 22 1997

³ Policy Statement, Sexuality Education, Abstinence, and Distribution of Condoms in Schools, AMA, 1999. http://www.ama-assn.org/apps/pf_online/pf_online?f_n=browse&doc=policyfiles/HOD/H-170.968.HTM

⁴ Policy Statement, Sexuality Education for Children and Adolescents, AAP, 2001. <http://www.aap.org/policy/0068.html>

⁵ Society for Adolescent Medicine. Position Statements on Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents: Sex Education. Available at: http://www.adolescenthealth.org/reproductive_health_.htm#position

⁶ American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Statement of Policy, Statement on Sexuality Education (July 1996).

⁷ ACOG Statement of Policy, The Limitations of Abstinence-Only Sexuality Education (May 1998).