



NEWS FROM MOAPPP

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State Turning Down Federal Funds

Despite persistent evidence that the state's education and health systems are not sufficiently addressing teenage sexual health, Minnesota is turning down more than \$850,000 in federal funds that would support quality prevention programs for young people. This is a puzzling decision that seems driven by politics, not prevention theory.

More than 6500 Minnesota teens become pregnant each year. The state's HIV rate jumped 77% among 13-19-year-olds last year. Chlamydia rates are on the rise among young people in every part of the state. And populations of color and those living in poverty are disproportionately affected. Two federal funding streams were made available to states this summer to address these issues.

One, the Personal Responsibility Education Program offers states the opportunity to support evidence-based programs that have been shown to change behavior: delaying sexual activity, increasing condom or contraceptive use for sexually active youth, or reducing pregnancy among youth. Guidelines provide a great deal of leeway for states to creatively incorporate other "adulthood preparation" subjects, like healthy relationships, parent-child communication, goal-setting and financial literacy. (See guidance [here](#)). The Governor has said "no" to the state applying for this funding.

The second funding stream was aimed at bolstering the long-standing "abstinence-only-until-marriage" message. This funding requires a state match of \$3 for every \$4 federal dollars, and requires states to "provide abstinence education, and....mentoring, counseling, and adult supervision to promote abstinence from sexual activity." (See the funding announcement [here](#)). Minnesota is eligible for \$505,743 in federal funding, and must provide \$379,307 in state funds to meet the match. The Governor has instructed the Health Department to say "yes" to this funding.

"There's been a concern in the field that Governors across the country would use these funding opportunities to rack up political points instead of putting young people's futures first," said Brigid Riley, Executive Director of MOAPPP, the Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting. "It appears that that's what is going on in Minnesota. Why else would you turn down almost a million dollars for youth programs that require NO MATCH, but take funding for failed programs that require a 75% MATCH?"

A 2010 study published in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* showed promising results for a newly designed abstinence-based program. But this program differed from the majority of abstinence-only programs in that it did *not* contain inaccurate information, portray sex in a negative light or use a moralistic tone. The training and curriculum manual explicitly instructed the facilitators not to disparage the efficacy of condoms or allow the view that condoms are ineffective to go uncorrected.

More than 30 years of peer-reviewed research supports the fact that when young people learn the importance of waiting to have sex AND about preventing pregnancy and disease, they wait *longer* before having sex, have *fewer* partners, and use condoms and contraception more effectively when they finally become sexually active.

A lot fewer Minnesota teens will get this message as a result of this decision.

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About MOAPPP: MOAPPP is a non-profit organization founded in 1991, and is the statewide leader in promoting adolescent sexual health, preventing adolescent pregnancy and gaining support for adolescent parents. We achieve this by developing, strengthening and advancing science-based policies and programs. For more information visit: www.moappp.org.