

June 16, 2009

Dear President Obama and Congressional Leaders,

As local, state, and national organizations focused on the health and education of our nation's young people, we are pleased by the new, evidence-based direction that the President's Fiscal Year 2010 budget suggests for the future of sex education in the United States. In particular, we are encouraged by the new initiative called for in the Administration's budget, but would like to offer the below recommendations that will strengthen the initiative and ensure it is sustainable in the long term.

We urge the Administration and the Congress to support:

1) inclusive language that supports HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infection programs in addition to teen pregnancy prevention.

Young people in this country need access to complete and comprehensive information that helps them make responsible and informed decisions. The current FY10 budget proposal focuses solely on preventing teen pregnancy and must be expanded to include the prevention of sexually transmitted infections. While teen pregnancy prevention is certainly important, it must not create an artificial barrier to investment in other critical interventions such as those that focus on HIV/AIDS education and prevention, healthy relationships, and comprehensive sex education. Further, many proven interventions that help young people wait to have sex and use contraception when they do, are not specifically teen pregnancy prevention programs and would therefore fall outside of the current suggested framework. We have an epidemic of sexually transmitted infections among adolescents and one young person acquires HIV in this country every hour. By supporting overarching language that is inclusive of additional approaches, we can make sure that comprehensive programs are brought to scale that meet the diverse needs all young people in all communities, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth whose needs fall wholly outside of the narrow teen pregnancy prevention framework.

2) specific and strategic investment in schools and school-based programs as a complement to already stated support for community-based programs.

President Obama's FY10 budget recognizes the need to support evidence-based intervention programs by working with community-based and faith-based organizations. These important institutions are critical for reaching young people, but must work alongside schools and school-based programs. Over the past several years, significant policy shifts and evidence-based programming in schools have created a unique and unprecedented opportunity to support a systemic change by assisting schools in institutionalizing comprehensive programs aimed at helping improve adolescent sexual behaviors. The current language excludes important public entities, such as schools,

from accessing funds under the new initiative. Prioritizing schools in the new initiative can help ensure smart and multi-faceted investments toward a sustainable legacy to improve the health of our nation.

3) diversified investments among multiple existing government agencies that can work in communities as well as schools, particularly at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Administration's current language maintains all of the funding at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within the Department of Health and Human Services. Ensuring funding for evidence-based interventions through the CDC will allow for a greater diversification of the new initiative's funding and can ensure that scarce resources are invested in federal agencies that have the capacity to successfully bring evidence-based interventions to scale immediately. For example, the CDC's Division of Reproductive Health and the Division of Adolescent School Health have proven track records in sex education programming for youth that is firmly rooted in public health practice. Therefore, while ACF certainly should have a role in the new initiative to work with faith and community-based organizations, it must not come at the exclusion of the CDC's proven prevention efforts that can help ensure success of the new initiative.

Again, we are encouraged by the significant step forward that the President's Fiscal Year 2010 budget represents in supporting evidence-based interventions. After \$1.5 billion of wasteful spending on ineffective abstinence-only-until-marriage programs, we have an opportunity to craft a program that addresses the root issues that help teens make responsible decisions and keep them safe and healthy. And with that opportunity comes the responsibility to take a holistic approach that includes both disease and teen pregnancy prevention programs.

Now is the time for a new direction to advance a more comprehensive vision for the diversity of programs that are needed to empower all young people to make healthy and responsible decisions about their relationships and their sexual health. The three items we advance here – and urge you to support – will move us closer to the type of change that is needed in our nation's approach to achieving a healthier and safer generation of young people.

Sincerely,

Abortion Care Network
Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of North Carolina
Advocates for Youth
AIDS Action
AIDS Alabama
AIDS Alliance for Children, Youth and Families
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
AIDS Life Campaign, Connecticut
AIDS Resource - Williamsport, PA
AIDS Resource Center Ohio
AIDS Taskforce of Greater Cleveland
Albany County AIDS Project - Laramie, WY
All Women's Health, PS - Chicago, IL
All Women's Health, PS - Tacoma, WA
American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists
American Association of University Women (AAUW)

American Association of University Women of Illinois (AAUW-IL)
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
American Journal of Sexuality Education
American Social Health Association
Answer, Rutgers University
Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Bethany for Children and Families - Moline, IL
Black Women for Reproductive Justice
Black Women's Health Imperative
CAEAR Foundation
Campus Progress
Cascade AIDS Project - Portland, OR
Catholics for Choice
CAVDA-Citizen AIDS Project
Cedar River Clinics, Washington State
Center for HIV Law and Policy
Center for Inquiry
Center for Reproductive Rights
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers
Chattanooga Cares
Chicago Foundation for Women
Chicago Women's AIDS Project
Chicago Women's Health Center
Choice USA
Citizen Action/Illinois
Coalition for Responsible Sex Ed - St. Paul, MN
COLAGE
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Colorado Organization on Adolescent, Pregnancy, Parenting and Prevention
Communications Consortium Media Center
Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Partnership (CHAMP)
Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network
Comprehensive School Health Coordinators Association of Michigan
Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition
Equality North Carolina
Family Equality Council
Family Matters, Inc. - Chicago, IL
Family Planning Association of Maine
Family Planning, Inc. - Quincy, IL
Florida Healthy Teens Campaign
FutureNet, The Iowa Network for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention, Parenting and Sexual Health
Fyre Youth Squad - New Orleans, LA
Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada
Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC)
Gay -Straight Alliance Network
Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
Georgia Parents for Responsible Health Education
Healthy Teen Network
HiTOPS - Princeton, NJ
HIV Law Project's Center for Women & HIV Advocacy

HIV Medicine Association
HIVictorious, Inc. - Madison, WI
Housing Works, Inc.
Human Rights Campaign
Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health (ICAH)
Illinois Parent Teacher Association
Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality
Institute of Women & Ethnic Studies - New Orleans, LA
International Women's Health Coalition
Ipas
Jewish Child and Family Services - Chicago, IL
Justice Now
Latino Commission on AIDS
Law Students for Reproductive Justice
Legal Momentum
Links-North Shore Youth Health Service -Northfield, IL
Love Heals!
Mary Wohlford Foundation - San Francisco, CA
Massachusetts Alliance on Teen Pregnancy
Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition
Mautner Project: The National Lesbian Health Organization
Medical Students for Choice, University of Chicago
Metro TeenAIDS - Washington, DC
Michigan AIDS Coalition
Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health
Minnesota AIDS Project
Minnesota Organization on Adolescent Pregnancy, Prevention and Parenting
Morris County NOW - New Jersey
Ms. Foundation for Women
NARAL Pro-Choice New York
NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina
Nashville CARES
National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD)
National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO)
National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)
National Center for Lesbian Rights
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Coalition for LGBT Health
National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSD)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Negro Women
National Council of Women's Organizations
National HIV Housing Coalition
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina Health Network
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Organization for Women
National Sexuality Resource Center
National Women's Health Network
National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC)
Nebraska AIDS Project

New Jersey Chapter Sierra Club
New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
New Mexico Teen Pregnancy
New Morning Foundation - Columbia, SC
New Orleans Women's Health and Justice Initiative
New Orleans Women's Health Clinic
Northwest Suburban Illinois National Organization for Women
Pacific Institute for Women's Health - Los Angeles, CA
Palmetto AIDS Life Support Services - Columbia, SC
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) National
Pennsylvania Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Pennsylvania NOW, Inc.
People For the American Way
Personal PAC - Chicago, IL
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
Plain Truth for Maine Youth
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Pro-Choice Public Education Project (PEP)
PWA Coalition of Dallas, Inc./AIDS Services of Dallas
Renz Prevention Center - Elgin, IL
Republican Majority for Choice
Response - Skokie, IL
Rock the Vote!
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Sexuality Information and Education Council of the US (SIECUS)
SisterLove, Inc. - Atlanta, GA
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective
Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE)
Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation
South Carolina Campaign to End AIDS
South Carolina Coalition for Healthy Families
Teen Parents Service Program - Montgomery County Health Department, MD
TeenNow California
TellThem! - Columbia, SC
Tennessee AIDS Advocacy Network
Texas Freedom Network
The Access Network, Inc. - Ridgeland, SC
The AIDS Institute
The American College of Sexologists
The Children's Aid Society
The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center - New York, NY
The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Action Fund
The Religious Institute
The Trevor Project - West Hollywood, CA
The Women's Collective
The Woodhull Freedom Foundation
Travelers AID Atlanta
Triad Health Project-Greensboro, NC
Tri-State Alliance, Inc - Evansville, IN
U.S. Positive Women's Network
UCHAPS: Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ
Village Care of New York
West House Personal Care Home - Williamsport, PA
Women Donors Network
Women of Reform Judaism
Women Organized to Respond to Life-threatening Disease (WORLD) - Oakland, CA
Women's Emergency Network - Coral Gables, FL
Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc.