

Presentation delivered during the Technical Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS/STI

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The Political Challenges to Effective HIV/AIDS Prevention

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SIECUS' No New Money for Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Programs Campaign

www.nonewmoney.org



Program History

How the \$ is Spent

What They Have to Teach

Harmful Consequences

Supporting Organizations

Public Support

International

The language that guides domestic programs:

- **A)** as its exclusive purpose teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity;
- **B)** teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school-age children;
- **C)** teaches that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other associated health problems;
- **D)** teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of sexual activity;
- **E)** teaches that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;
- **F)** teaches that bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child's parents, and society;
- **G)** teaches young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increase vulnerability to sexual advances, and
- **H)** teaches the importance of attaining self-sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity.

- **B)** teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school-age children;
- **D)** teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of sexual activity;
- **E)** teaches that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;

****“sexual activity” is never defined****

Why should those outside the US care about this?

- A new industry has been built – over \$1 billion US spent in the US
- Meant to replace – not compliment – more comprehensive sexual health promotion efforts
- Undoing the existing structure of HIV prevention efforts in the US
- Now leading in efforts to undo advances in international adolescent SRHR
- Marriage as a public health intervention

President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

- 1/3 “hard earmark” for abstinence-until-marriage programs (as much as \$1 billion USD)
- Fought hard for language to protect condoms
- Able to keep 8-point definition that guides domestic programs out of PEPFAR (for now)

A Pattern of Policy Behavior

- Greater exercise of oversight – directly on grantees and through development offices in-country
- Stricter ideological adherence
- Foothold through funding expands exponentially as new providers rush in
- Science becomes less relevant as a guide to public health

What Can Be Done?

- Networking to protect adolescent SRHR – PAHO's Adolescent Sexual Health Advisory Committee on Latin America and the Caribbean (ASHACLAC)
- Monitoring, reporting on the forces that seek to undo advances in SRHR (Ex: SIECUS' International Right Wing Watch)
- Hold governments accountable for commitments that further SRHR
- Continue to seek common ground with the Church – agreement not needed but open obstructionism is morally wrong and counterproductive
- Advocacy is no longer a choice, it is a necessity
- Maintain and defend the centrality of science and public health data to sexual health promotion