

# Position Statement of the Family Planning, STD and HIV Program

The Family Planning, STD and HIV Program (FPSHP) wants young people to be healthy – and health includes human sexuality. Idaho surveys show that 60 percent of Idaho teenagers report having sexual intercourse at least once by the time they are seniors in high school [1]. Chlamydia, the most commonly reported disease in Idaho, and in the U.S., most often strikes young people [2]. On average, 80 percent of sexually transmitted disease (STD) cases are reported in 15-24 year olds and the number of HIV cases reported in youth is increasing [2]. These statistics inform us that our young people have the most reportable disease in Idaho and they need skills to protect themselves from STD/HIV.

The FPSHP is charged with keeping young people healthy, but STD rates are rising [2]. We cannot ignore the problem and do nothing – we need to provide youth with the facts so they can make better decisions. We do that by making comprehensive education about strategies scientifically proven to prevent STD/HIV available to youth on this Website. Research shows that teens who receive comprehensive, skills based, sex education delay sexual intercourse and engage in less risky behavior [3]. While FPSHP always includes abstinence as a method to prevent STD and unintended pregnancy, research shows that abstinence only education (i.e., education that presents abstinence as the best and only solution and restricts information about other prevention strategies such as condom use) has not been as effective in preventing unplanned pregnancy or STD/HIV as comprehensive sex education [4]. Even if one is not currently sexually active, we believe the information on this website will always be useful, because nearly everyone becomes sexually active at some point in their life.

The purpose of this Website is to convey factual information to all, regardless of sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, political beliefs or religion. FPSHP is not promoting sex or homosexuality; we are presenting health messages in a way that we believe will get the attention of those who are at risk of contracting HIV or STD. We are fulfilling our professional obligation to make the most up-to-date, factual sexual health information readily available, so that every person has access to the information they need to make healthy choices about how to take care of their self. We hope that you find the information helpful.

1. Idaho Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2007. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Healthy youth!* Retrieved December 11, 2008 from <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/yrbss/QuestYearTable.asp?path=byHT&ByVar=CI&cat=1&quest=Q21&year=Trend&loc=ID>.
2. Idaho Reported Sexually Transmitted Disease, 2006. Office of Epidemiology and Food Protection, Department of Health and Welfare.
3. Alford S. Science and Success: Sex Education and Other Programs that Work to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV & Sexually Transmitted Infections. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth, 2003.
4. Santelli J et al. Abstinence and abstinence-only education: a review of U.S. policies and programs. *Journal of Adolescent Health* 2006; 38(1): 72-81.