

Condoms and Schools: Living Well Together

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Health Resource Centers (HRCs)

- The HRCs are high school drop-in centers where students can get:
 - Counseling and education (including abstinence)
 - Condoms
 - Referrals to family planning and other services
 - Urine-based STD and pregnancy testing (select sites)
- Parents have the option to prohibit students from receiving condoms (opt out)

HRC Administration

- Players: Family Planning Council, School District of Philadelphia, healthcare providers, Philadelphia Dept of Public Health
- With money, supplies (\$30,000) and direction from the Council, each HRC is managed by a healthcare provider
- Staffed by experienced counselors, health educators, and social workers

HRC Services: SY 2006-2007

- 9 HRCs provided services.
- 6,078 students
 - 36% of all students enrolled at the 9 schools
 - Males (56%) and females (44%)
 - Fairly even distribution by grade: 9th (19%), 10th(27%), 11th (29%); 12th(25%)
- Less than 1% of parents "opted-out"

HRC Services: SY 2006-2007

- 31,110 visits
 - Average of 5 visits per student
- 6,184 counseling sessions
 - In addition to basic counseling for all students
- 90,000 condoms
 - Condoms provided at 73% of visits
- 802 referrals

Testing Services: SY 2006-2007

- STD screening and pregnancy testing offered at 4 HRCs
 - 1,882 STD tests
 - Female: 8.9% positive
 - Male: 4.7% positive
 - 507 pregnancy tests
 - 11% positive
- Testing pays for itself

HRC History

- In 1990, the School District of Philadelphia created a task force to look at HIV, STD, and teen pregnancy
- The recommendations included 2 major components:
 - Comprehensive sex education with a focus on abstinence (K-12)
 - In-school condom availability

HRC History: Policy 123

- In 1991, the School District passed Policy 123: Adolescent Sexuality
- Policy allows for condom availability for high school students in context of counseling and education, including abstinence
- Implementation was negotiated before the policy was enacted
 - Parental involvement (opt out)
 - School personnel would not be responsible for distributing condoms

HRC History: Legal Challenge

- In 1992, a local parents organization challenged the legality of the in-school condom availability program.
- The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit upheld the District's authority to implement the program.
- The Court found that the voluntary nature of the program did not infringe on the rights of parents.

Tips for Starting an HRC Program

- Clear policy from the school district
- Expect strong opposition
- A parental opt-out works
- Federal family planning (Title X) funds preserves confidentiality

Tips for Starting an HRC Program

- Providing counseling and education, along with condoms, meets the needs of students.
- Having the program staffed by trained professionals from local health care providers makes a great deal of sense.
- Reliable, on-going funding is crucial to the maintenance and expansion of such a program.

What's Next?

- To expand HRC program, we need:
 - Money – about \$1million for all schools
 - Greater participation by the School District
- Current factors support HRC expansion
 - New Mayor, Health Commissioner, and Superintendent
 - Greater attention on teen sexual health part of dropout prevention efforts

For More Information

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