

HIV/STD PREVENTION EDUCATION IN OUR SCHOOLS

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2008

- WHEREAS, PTA believes that comprehensive health education that emphasizes disease prevention education is essential for each child to develop to his fullest potential; and
- WHEREAS, An estimated 1.1 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STI) occurred among young persons in California between the ages of 15-24 in 2005, making sexually transmitted diseases (STD) the most commonly reported communicable disease in the state; and
- WHEREAS, Sexually transmitted diseases (STD) are often asymptomatic, the true burden of these diseases is many times greater than the number of reported cases; and
- WHEREAS, Sexually transmitted infections (STI) can have considerable and long lasting impact on the health and quality of life of those individuals infected; and
- WHEREAS, The California Education Code (EC), Chapter 5.6, sections 51930-51939, California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Act, requires that HIV/AIDS prevention instruction occur at least once in middle school and once in high school and comprehensive sexual health is authorized, but not required; and
- WHEREAS, The California EC, Chapter 5.6, section 51933 & 51934 [3] directs that if a school district chooses to teach Comprehensive Sexual Health or the required HIV/AIDS prevention education, sexual abstinence may be taught but instruction and materials about the effectiveness and safety of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods in preventing pregnancy must also be provided; and
- WHEREAS, Comprehensive sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention education in the provides pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to promote current, medically accurate, age-appropriate, comprehensive sexual health and HIV/STD prevention education in the schools taught by instructors trained in the appropriate courses; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to make available current medically accurate educational programs and materials to parents about comprehensive sexual health and HIV/STD prevention education.

HIV/STD Prevention Education in our Schools - *continued*

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

California State PTA has supported sexually transmitted disease (STD)* prevention education since 1973 and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) prevention education since 1988.

Although sexual activity and the number of pregnancies in teens has declined in recent years, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance data from 2005 indicate that 63.1% of high school seniors reported having engaged in sexual behaviors, and the age of onset of sexual activity is shockingly young...6.2% reported sexual intercourse before 13 years of age. Nearly half of new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STI) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the United States occur in young people, 15-24 years of age. As a result, about one-third of all sexually active young people become infected with an STD by age 24. Given this large number of individuals who engage in sex in their teenage years, the importance of being proactive in educating our youth about sexuality cannot be emphasized strongly enough. STDs are by far the most commonly reported communicable diseases in California (and in the United States).

A study done in 2005 indicates that an estimated 1.1 million new cases of STI occurred among young persons in California between the ages of 15-24 with a direct medical cost of \$1.1 billion. Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can have considerable and long-lasting impact on the health and quality of life of individuals, in the form of infertility, ectopic pregnancies, dyspareunia, cancer, and increased susceptibility to HIV.

The California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Act, 2003 authorizes school districts to provide comprehensive sexual health education in any kindergarten to grade 12, inclusive, and ensures that all pupils in grades 7-12, inclusive receive HIV/AIDS prevention education. A “comprehensive sexual health education” means education regarding human development and sexuality, including education on pregnancy, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. “Medically accurate” means verified or supported by research conducted in compliance with scientific methods and published in peer-reviewed journals, where appropriate and recognized as accurate and objective by professional organizations and agencies with expertise in the relevant field, such as the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Public Health Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

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* Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are infections that can be transferred from one person to another through any type of sexual contact. STDs are sometimes referred to as sexually transmitted infections (STIs) since they involve the transmission of a disease-causing organism from one person to another during sexual activity.