

Adolescent Health Care Information Forum and Public Hearing
June 21, 2011

Good afternoon; my name is Shay Ingersoll. Like many of the youth who stand to be positively impacted by advances in adolescent health, I am a product of the Connecticut public school system. After twelve years of education in the town of Bloomfield and undergraduate work at Central Connecticut State University, I believe I can speak to what the youth of this state deserve.

Comprehensive sex education is vital in ensuring our youth are equipped with the tools to effectively make decisions. It is not enough to touch base on healthy sexual practices because adolescent's lives are not one dimensional. On a daily basis they face social obstacles for which they have little to no experience navigating. Sex education should address relationships, decision-making, self-esteem, and skill building to combat peer pressure; issues that were not adequately discussed during my primary education.

While abstinence may be the safest form of prevention of negative sexual outcomes, abstinence-only education is not. Simply supplying students with information is insignificant if they lack the skills needed to assert what they've learned. Our aim should be to delay sexual initiation, increase contraception usage once sexual relationships have been initiated and decrease the number of teen pregnancies and STIs by creating a learning culture in which the youth can comfortably discuss their experiences. Comprehensive sex education stands to effectively achieve these goals.

We can either censor our youth from this form of education that could literally save their lives or equip them with the appropriate social skills that will in turn develop confident, well informed adults who make the right decisions. Comprehensive sex education is an investment in the future of this state and the children who will eventually inherit it.

Thank you.