



May 1, 2019

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## **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH, RIGHTS AND JUSTICE GROUPS LAUNCH SEX ED FOR ALL MONTH**

*Key Education Legislation to Be Introduced During Month of May*

**(Washington, D.C.)** – Today, reproductive health and rights groups dedicated to improving sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice for all, launched *Sex Ed For All Month: Accessing Power, Information and Rights*. The effort will focus on the sexual health information, access and rights young people need and deserve in order to make healthy decisions for themselves and live life on their terms. Sex Ed For All Month replaces Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month and focuses on working towards all young people having the power and right to access the education and health care they need to achieve the best positive outcomes for themselves.

While existing federal funding for evidence-based sexual health education is critical, it cannot meet the national need. Too many young people go without the sexual health information and access to the care they not only need but have a right to receive. The launch of Sex Ed For All Month is timely as key sexual health legislation will be introduced during the month. The Real Education for Healthy Youth Act (REHYA) and the Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act (YASHS) will help ensure all young people receive high-quality, culturally competent sexual health information and access to the care they need.

Sex Ed For All is our effort to help young people in marginalized communities, including communities of color, LGBTQ young people, immigrants, those with lower incomes, those living in rural areas and those in foster care have access to the information and care they need to ensure their lifelong sexual and reproductive health.

### **Debra Hauser, President, Advocates for Youth**

Young people have the right to lead healthy lives, and that includes sex education that is of high quality, age appropriate, and honest. Yet the Trump Administration continues to fund inaccurate and dangerous abstinence-only programs, most recently calling them Sexual Risk Avoidance (SRA) programs. Withholding lifesaving information, as SRA and abstinence-only programs do, leaves young people vulnerable to unplanned pregnancy and STIs, and ill equipped to set boundaries, ask for consent, and navigate healthy relationships as they mature. Sex Ed for All Month provides policymakers at all levels to center the needs of young people, particularly those most marginalized, and commit to equipping them with all of the information and skills they need to be sexually healthy.



**Janet Max, MPH, CHES, Acting President and CEO, Healthy Teen Network**

Our society has a responsibility to support and empower young people to lead healthy lives, and that includes sexual lives. We cannot allow ideology to obscure science or ostracize entire populations of young people. We cannot just talk about pregnancy or disease. Our young people need sex-positive, high quality sex ed and access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health care, and they need it now. Why ‘Sex Ed for All’? Because it’s a human right.

**Dr. Leana Wen, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America**

The science is clear: countless studies have shown that sex education reduces the rate of unintended pregnancies, reduces the rate of STIs, and empowers people to make the best decisions for themselves. Less than 40% of high schools and only 14% of middle schools across the US meet the CDC guidelines for sex education. Yet, the Trump-Pence administration has cut funding and redefined sex education to be abstinence-only. We at Planned Parenthood are proud to work alongside partners and champions in Congress to support the Real Education for Healthy Youth Act and Youth Access to Sexual Health Services Act. We know the importance of sex education for all and will fight every attempt to dismantle access to evidence-based sex education because we know that current and future generations deserve to lead lives of choice, and not chance.

**Ginny Ehrlich, D.Ed, MPH, MS, CEO, Power to Decide**

At Power to Decide, we believe that all young people – no matter who they are or where they live – deserve quality sexual information, access to reproductive health services and the agency and support necessary to decide if, when and under what circumstances to get pregnant and have a child. We are proud to stand alongside our sister organizations to launch *Sex Ed For All Month: Accessing Power, Information and Rights*, which will replace Teen Pregnancy Prevention month. This marks a new direction for Power to Decide. Power to Decide will support Sex Ed for All Month, through our [#TalkingIsPower](#) campaign, which encourages champions and allies to talk early and often to the young people in their lives about sex, love and relationships. Throughout the year, Power to Decide remains committed to ensuring all young people have access to quality sexual health information and services, and the opportunity to determine what is best for them.

**Christine Soyong Harley, President & CEO, Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)**

It is past time we start providing all young people in this country with the information and skills they need to stay safe and healthy. Right now, far too many students fail to receive any sex education at all—let alone lessons they can see themselves reflected in. The rebrand and the legislation being introduced this month bring us closer toward our goal of recognizing the diverse lived experiences of today's young people and providing them with the high-quality, shame-free sex ed they should have already been receiving.