



# Monday *MONITOR*

April 16, 2007

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## **HCS HB1055 – HOUSE OMNIBUS ANTI-CHOICE BILL SENT TO FLOOR**

**HCS HB1055 (Sander)**, originally an Alternatives to Abortion bill that is now a companion to **SCS SB370 et al** in the Senate, was voted 'do pass' by Rules Committee with a three-hour time limit. This bill would make medically accurate and complete information about contraception *optional* in sex education classes, ban Planned Parenthood (and other) trained educators and information from public schools, and close two of the three abortion facilities in Missouri. At the same time, it specifically prohibits ATA funds from being used for family planning services. This bill is on the House Perfection Calendar.

## **DAVIS ABSTINENCE-ONLY/SEX MIS-EDUCATION BILL MORPHS INTO 3<sup>RD</sup> OMNIBUS BILL**

**HB 716 (Davis)**, which was returned to committee last week, emerged as **HCS HB716** – yet another Omnibus Anti-Choice bill. While containing the same restrictions in the two bills mentioned above, the language in the sex mis-education section is slightly different. It was referred to Rules Committee, but no hearing has been scheduled.

## **GOOD NEWS! HPV BILL UNANIMOUSLY VOTED 'DO PASS' IN HOUSE COMMITTEE**

**HCS HB802 (Page)** was unanimously voted 'do pass' in House Special Committee on Insurance and referred to Rules Committee. This bill, which originally required girls entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade to receive the HPV vaccination, now would require information about the vaccine be sent to parents. Gardasil, the new vaccine, guards against two of the most virulent strains of HPV that are responsible for 70% of all cervical cancers.

## **UNINSURED WOMEN'S HEALTH PROGRAM AMENDED TO HB39 IN SENATE COMMITTEE**

The Uninsured Women's Health Program was amended on to **HCS HB39 (Portwood)** in Senate Health and Mental Health Committee. This bill – referred to as 'Ticket to Work' or 'MAWD' – would allow low-income individuals who are disabled but who work to obtain Medicaid health coverage. This was an extremely popular and effective program eliminated in 2005; unfortunately, the Senate Committee Substitute is less generous in eligibility levels than the House version.

## **SB577 – NO HEALTHNET – APPROVED 26 TO 7 IN SENATE; SENT TO HOUSE**

Despite the fact that this bill does not 'reform' Medicaid in any meaningful way, and despite its lack of clear details, **SS SCS SB577 (Shields)** was approved by the Senate. It will be handled in the House by Rep. Sater and has been sent to the Special Committee on Healthcare Facilities. Committee Chair Schaaf has held a series of informational hearings to prepare the committee.

## **PREVENTION FIRST LOBBY DAY TO PROTECT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH**

**Tuesday, April 17, 2007, 10:00am -- FIRST FLOOR ROTUNDA**

Hundreds of advocates from across the state will join together in Jefferson City to demand: family planning for low-income women; comprehensive sex education; birth control prescriptions filled without judgment or delay; increased access to emergency contraception; and, protection of professional abortion care.

## **STUDY: ABSTINENCE CLASSES DON'T STOP SEX [Excerpts]**

*Associated Press, April 14, 2007*

**Students who took part in sexual abstinence programs were just as likely to have sex as those who did not, according to a study ordered by Congress...** Also, those who attended one of the four abstinence classes that were reviewed reported having similar numbers of sexual partners as those who did not attend the classes. **And they first had sex at about the same age as other students -- 14.9 years**, according to Mathematica Policy Research Inc...

For its study, Mathematica looked at students in four abstinence programs around the country as well as students from the same communities who did not participate in the abstinence programs. The 2,057 youths came from big cities -- Miami and Milwaukee -- as well as rural communities -- Powhatan, Va., and Clarksdale, Miss. The students who participated in abstinence education did so for one to three years. Their average age was 11 to 12 when they entered the programs back in 1999. Mathematica then did a follow up survey in late 2005 and early 2006...[and] found that about half of the abstinence students and about half from the control group reported that they remained abstinent...

The federal government now spends about \$176 million annually on abstinence-until-marriage education... **"Members of Congress need to listen to what the evidence tells us,"** said William Smith, vice president for public policy at the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States, which promotes comprehensive sex education. "This report should give a clear signal to members of Congress that the program should be changed to support programs that work, or it should end when it expires at the end of June," Smith said... **"this was supposed to be their all-star lineup."**

## **JUST SAY NO**

*Editorial: St. Louis Post Dispatch. Sunday, Apr. 15 2007*

State governments aren't in the habit of turning down millions of dollars in federal funds. But some states, weary of the strings attached to government funding for sex education, are just saying no. At least six states — Ohio, Wisconsin, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Montana and New Jersey — either already have dropped out of the State Abstinence Education Grant program or plan to drop out by the end of the year. Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland said that regardless of the state's sluggish economic picture, he did not see the point in participating in the grant program any longer, the Los Angeles Times reported.

It's a smart move. The State Abstinence Education Grant program, which provides \$163 million for programs nationwide, requires that sex education classes be focused almost exclusively on teaching chastity. There is virtually no discussion of condoms and contraception. The grant program is managed by the federal Department of Health and Human Services. Abstinence is a good message, especially for teens. But **the narrow focus of abstinence-only curricula leaves sexually active youth in the dark.** Worse yet, the Government Accountability Office surveyed the abstinence programs in 10 states and concluded that they have not been proven to work and **at times provided medically inaccurate information about condoms and AIDS. In an era of rising sexually transmitted diseases, that's inexcusable.**

Just last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported new data from 26 U.S. cities that the **number of cases of antibiotic-resistant gonorrhea is rising dramatically**, raising concerns about how to treat this common sexually transmitted disease.

A study released in December by the Guttmacher Institute, a private New York-based think tank that studies sexual and reproductive issues, reported that **more than nine out of 10 Americans have had premarital sex.** The study's author, Lawrence Finer, said the likelihood of Americans having sex before marriage has remained stable since the 1950s, although people now wait longer to get married and so are single longer. Other studies have shown that comprehensive sex education is the most effective way to delay sexual activity among young people and prepare young people to protect themselves from disease and unwanted pregnancy.

**Unfortunately, Missouri legislators have been slow to catch on.** A bill being considered by the Missouri House (**HR 716**) would remove references to contraceptives and push abstinence and alternatives to abortion, such as adoption. The legislation is sponsored by Rep. Cynthia Davis, R-O'Fallon. Under current law, schools that teach sex education are required to present the "latest medically factual information" on the benefits, side-effects and failure rates of contraceptive methods. Ms. Davis' bill would strike that, saying instead that information on contraceptives and pregnancy should conform to a federal abstinence-only program.

The goal of sex education should be to help young people make fully informed, timely decisions that are best for their individual circumstances — not to sacrifice their health and well-being on the altar of politics.

**When sex education provides only incomplete information because the full story has been expurgated by politicians, it is the young people — ill-informed and unprotected — who pay the highest price.**