

INTRODUCTION

Despite the substantial 17% decline in its teenage pregnancy rate during the 1990's, the United States continues to have one of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy, childbearing and abortion in the developed world — an unfortunate tradition it has carried on for the last twenty years.

Pregnancy, Birth and Abortion Rates (per thousand) for Young Women, Ages 15–19

Country	Pregnancy	Birth	Abortion
Netherlands	12	4	4.2
Germany	16	14	3.1
France	20	9	8.9
United States	84	52	26.8
(Oregon)	72	48	24

The incidence of sexually transmitted infections among U.S. (and Oregon) teens is also substantially higher than in most industrialized countries.

There are a number of factors that influence the differences in teen sexual health throughout these other nations: affordable family planning services, sustained, realistic media campaigns, public health grounded in pragmatism and research; and sexuality information characterized by open, honest dialogue. Philosophically, many European countries accept that adolescents, especially older ones, often choose to have a sexual relationship. Consequently, the programs and policies focus on protective services, knowledge, behaviors and skills.

In the United States, programs, policies and national initiatives focus on delaying sex as long as possible (i.e., \$250 million dollars appropriated by Congress for abstinence until marriage education), yet U.S. teens experience first intercourse one to two years before their European peers. Challenges are ongoing over sexuality education in public schools, minors' access to contraceptive services and confidential testing / treatment for sexually transmitted infections. The media continues to feature explicit sexuality devoid of responsible messages. As a whole, Oregon, along with the rest of the nation, continues to spin its wheels around the issue of teen sexual behavior.

If we continue to do what we've always done, we'll continue to get what we've always gotten: the attending complications of premature and unprotected sex among youth — unacceptable teen pregnancy rates, children having children, and epidemic numbers of sexually transmitted infections.

The lessons learned from the European approach to adolescent sexuality are incredibly compelling. They offer great insight and promise as we struggle here in Oregon and around the country to formulate our own plan of action. Oregon feels ripe for bringing this issue to the next level. Consider:

- Through the state's Family Planning Expansion Project, great strides are being made in reducing barriers to reproductive health services, contraceptives and sexual protection.
- The Oregon Governor's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Plan calls for action that encourages the adoption of multiple strategies which are similar or complementary to the European approach.
- While Oregon does not mandate that sexuality education be taught in public schools, there are specific requirements about what must be included should a program be implemented. Despite the constant challenges, Oregon legislation does require that

sexuality education “enhance students’ understanding of sexuality as a normal and healthy aspect of human development.” The statute mandates that course materials and instruction be abstinence— based, however “...abstinence shall not be taught to the exclusion of other materials and instruction on contraception and disease reduction measures.”

So we have something to work with. A public understanding of the European experience would provide a significant boost to move Oregon forward.

PROPOSAL

Planned Parenthood proposes to develop a statewide cadre of individuals and organizations committed to reducing teen pregnancy rates in Oregon who will advocate for policies and programs that adapt lessons learned about effective strategies in Europe. This project is relevant to the Oregon Governor’s Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Plan: Action Agenda 2000 in that it seeks to promote awareness of and support for realistic approaches to teen sexual behavior and responsibility. Further, the project will educate policy makers and opinion leaders about Europe’s public policies that have led to a positive view of adolescent sexuality and widespread support for education and service programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

Clearly, this will be a multi-year effort designed to make fundamental changes in the way Oregon addresses adolescent sexual health. As part of this long—term project, Planned Parenthood will work with Advocates for Youth, a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, whose mission is to create programs and promote policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive health. The goal of this collaboration is to help shape a public policy atmosphere in the state of Oregon that fosters a positive, healthy environment for adolescent sexual development. Achieving this goal is a critical element in decreasing the incidence of unintended teen pregnancies, births, abortions and sexually transmitted infections.

Long-term objectives include:

- 1) reframing the debate into a cooperative discussion that accepts the “three Rs” of adolescent sexual health: rights, respect and responsibility — where government, clergy, parents and media work with adolescents to safeguard young people’s reproductive and sexual health;
- 2) analyzing and comparing European public policies regarding adolescent sexual health to public policies in Oregon and recommending approaches/programs that may be transferable to Oregon to assist in reducing teen pregnancy rates and the incidence of sexually transmitted infections among youth;
- 3) disseminating research, findings and recommendations to policy makers, opinion leaders and media throughout the state;
- 4) educating the public through presentations, op eds, articles, media spots and public service announcements about successful programs and policies that prevent teen pregnancies.

With this current grant request, Planned Parenthood is seeking funds from the E.C. Brown Charitable Trust to support two major components of this long—term project:

1. Educational events / work sessions in five Oregon cities with Advocates for Youth

Director of Sexuality Education, Barbara Huberman, and

2) sponsorship of twenty Oregon participants on Advocates for Youth's summer 2001 European research / study tour

1. Educational Events / Work Sessions

Planned Parenthood will sponsor combined educational events / work sessions to promote the lessons learned from the European approach to adolescent sexuality. Key leaders and community members from around the state (policy makers, legislators, public health, medical professionals, media, youth, school superintendents / principals / board, clergy, etc.) will be invited to participate.

Presentations will be provided at several Oregon sites by Barbara Huberman from Advocates for Youth, an international, nonprofit organization that creates programs and supports policies that help young people make safe, responsible decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. In her role as Director of Sexuality Education, Ms. Huberman has conducted research / study tours in France, Germany and the Netherlands designed to answer the question, "Why are adolescent sexual health indicators so much more positive in the three European countries than they are in the United States?"

Following her presentations and question / answer sessions, Ms. Huberman will facilitate work sessions in which participants will meet in small groups to digest, discuss, and ultimately begin some action planning with specific next steps. Thus will begin a process in which change can be created... change which builds upon the lessons of the European model. Through this process, Planned Parenthood will begin to develop a cadre of individuals and organizations throughout Oregon committed to advocating for effective policies and strategies around adolescent sexual behavior and responsibility.

The educational events / work sessions will be held in five locations: Portland, Eugene, Medford, Grants Pass and Coos Bay. Planned Parenthood Health Services of Southwestern Oregon (PPHSSO) will coordinate the project and host events in Eugene, Medford and Grants Pass; Planned Parenthood of the Columbia Willamette is the lead agency for the Portland area; and the Coos County RAPP (Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy Project) Committee is taking responsibility for the event in Coos Bay. In addition to collaborating with these entities, Planned Parenthood is generating enthusiasm, support and participation agreements from key segments in the community including legislators, the Oregon Dept. of Education, county health departments, Lane, Jackson and Josephine County RAPP Committees, the media, clergy, youth, social service providers and the medical community.

2. Sponsorship of Twenty—Member Oregon Team on Summer '01 Research / Study Tour

This two—week European Research / Study Tour conducted by Advocates for Youth is designed to explore and identify strategies, programs and policies in the Netherlands, Germany and France that have influenced adolescent sexual behavior and outcomes. Sending a team of Oregonians to experience this first hand will significantly enhance the success of our long—term efforts here in this state. Participants will be selected based upon their commitment to openness and implementation of new paradigms of sexual risk reduction strategies, and their interest and ability to become involved in post—tour activities to educate others about European strategies and policies. Representatives from identified key groups will be recruited, including youth, policy makers, public officials, media, clergy, public health, social services, medical, education, etc. Priority will be given to a statewide representation, and attention will be paid to ensuring participation by communities of color.

Upon their return, Research / Study Tour participants will be supported by Planned Parenthood, in collaboration with Advocates for Youth, in utilizing their experience in a constructive, meaningful way to advance positive sexual health policies and practices. Over time, the Oregon team members will work to:

- Increase public understanding of and support for adolescent reproductive and sexual health;

- Educate policy makers on the need for initiatives that support responsible behaviors among sexually active youth;
- Increase the capacity of organizations to institutionalize these initiatives and practices.

Team activities will include: writing and distributing an analysis on European policies/programs regarding adolescent sexual health and recommending approaches that may be transferable to Oregon communities; conducting educational sessions to disseminate Research / Study Tour findings and; working with youth, parents, educators and the media to help adolescents filter their knowledge and feelings about sex and sexuality through a positive, healthy framework that fosters both respect and responsibility.

This proposal represents a critical step in pursuing a long term vision that will ultimately change the way in which Oregon approaches the challenging issues associated with adolescent sexuality. Phase one in this process has been accomplished: Planned Parenthood's executive director, Bill Sheppard, participated in the May 2000 European Research / Study Tour to The Netherlands, France and Germany. With this experience and deeper understanding, Planned Parenthood is prepared to launch phases two and three which are the focus of this proposal: the sponsorship of combined educational events / work sessions to promote the lessons learned from the European approach to adolescent sexuality, and the participation of a twenty member Oregon team on the 2001 European Research / Study Tour, resulting in the development of a core group of leaders and community members who will help shape future projects within this initiative to improve adolescent sexual health indicators for Oregon youth.

In subsequent phases, Planned Parenthood proposes:

- The development and implementation of an intensive social marketing plan conveying focused, consistent messages regarding adolescent sexuality and responsible sexual behavior;
- Specific projects focused on the following areas:
 - Media** — to influence responsible messages and programming around adolescent sexual behavior;
 - Reproductive and Sexual Health Services for Teens** — to improve access to services as well as clear support and encouragement for utilizing the services;
 - Sexuality Education** — to encourage the use of comprehensive, research—based curricula in schools, alternative education settings, community—based programs, etc.
 - Family and Community Influences on Adolescent Sexuality** — to support parents in communicating openly and effectively with their children about sexual issues; to support the community in providing consistent messages around responsible adolescent sexual behavior.
- Collaborative projects with existing organizations and programs that work with and care about youth and families — projects geared toward advancing the initiative.

Ultimately, the goal of this ambitious effort is a new vision of adolescent sexual health through the development and implementation of workable programs, policies and strategies in Oregon that support healthy, responsible adolescent sexuality and the subsequent reduction in teen pregnancies, births, abortions, sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

BUDGET

PHASE 2: EDUCATIONAL EVENTS / WORK SESSIONS

Personnel (Eugene, Medford and Grants Pass only)

salary	\$7,000
benefits	1,050

Speaker Expenses

Airfare	\$520
Car Rental (6 days) (includes insurance)	290
Food & Lodging (6 days)	870
Presenter's Fee	6,000

Luncheon (Eugene, Medford and Grants Pass only)

Room Rental	600
A/V Equipment	255
Food/Beverages/Gratuity (550 participants over three sites)	7,275

Promotional Materials / Participant Packets Eugene, Medford and Grants Pass only)

Printing (1200 invitations and response cards; 550 participant packets, etc.)	650
Postage	396

SUBTOTAL \$24,906

Note: Funding for events held in Coos Bay has been committed by Coos Co. RAPP (Reduce Adolescent Pregnancy Partnership); in Portland by Planned Parenthood of the Columbia/Willamette.

PHASE 3: SPONSORSHIP OF TWENTY-MEMBER OREGON TEAM ON THE SUMMER 2001 EUROPEAN RESEARCH/STUDY TOUR

Participant Travel Expenses

includes:

all air/ground travel in the US and Europe, lodging and meals for 15 days for 20 participants @ \$5,000 per participant	\$100,000
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TOTAL EXPENSES \$124,906

Note: Funding request for European Research / Study Tour is for Oregon participants only. All additional costs associated with coordination and administration of this phase of the project will be assumed by Planned Parenthood Health Services of Southwestern Oregon.