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STUDY AFFIRMS NEW YORK'S DECISION TO REFUSE ABSTINENCE-ONLY FUNDS Research Shows Comprehensive Sex Education Effective

Albany, NY (September 17, 2008)—A national study confirms that abstinence-only sex education is ineffective, affirming New York State's decision to drop federal funding for abstinence-only programs.

Led by Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., the State cancelled federal abstinence-only contracts under the Title V program last year. Beginning October 1, 2007, the State redirected funding to programs that can include comprehensive sex education.

"Study after study shows that abstinence-only sex education doesn't work," said Susan Pedo, acting president and CEO of Family Planning Advocates of New York State. "This is more evidence that Commissioner Daines made the right decision in redirecting funding from failed abstinence-only programs to more effective comprehensive programs."

Comprehensive sex education programs, which emphasize abstinence first and the use of protection for those who do have sex, "is effective and does not send a confusing message to young people," according to Douglas B. Kirby, Ph.D., who released his study through the New York City-based Guttmacher Institute.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, there were 746,820 pregnancies among 15 to 19 year olds in the United States in 2002. New York State Department of Health figures show 40,121 teen pregnancies in 2006. In New York, 6 out of every 10 students have had sex before they graduate from high school.

The federal government has provided \$1.5 billion in funding to abstinence-only programs. However, "study results indicated that most abstinence programs did not delay the initiation of sex and only 3 of 9 had any significant positive effects on any sexual behavior," Kirby wrote. In contrast, he found that two-thirds of comprehensive programs helped young people delay initiation of sex while increasing condom and contraception use.

Family Planning Advocates supports New York's proposed Healthy Teens Act, which would establish a competitive grant program to fund age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education. The act passed the Assembly in each of the past four years, but the Senate has failed to pass it.

To view the full report, visit www.guttmacher.org.

For more information about family planning issues in New York, visit www.fpaofnys.org.

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