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ROMI Abstinence-Centered Education Programs Effective

Studies from CDC, Spectrum and Zogby International Confirm Findings

Jackson, Mississippi (January 25, 2010) – According to new data released by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) *abstinence education is the best way to prevent the spread of the sexually transmitted disease (STD) human papillomavirus (HPV). The agency also said the use of condoms is not as effective as abstinence*¹. In Jackson, Redemption Outreach Ministries International, Inc. (ROMI) offers the STARS (Students Taking a Radical Stand) Abstinence-Centered Program in Jackson Public Schools, in the Rankin County Adolescent Opportunity Program (AOP), and in several parochial schools.

“We are delighted to know that data from the CDC and a number of other new studies document what we have believed all along – that abstinence-centered education is effective,” said ROMI/STARS Program Director Larry McAdoo, adding, “We have always taught that the healthiest choice for adolescents is abstinence and that it should be the central focus of any responsible sex education program.”

The Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, which funds abstinence education, requires that programs use a curriculum that focuses on the “critical change factors” of abstinence: 1) the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, 2) the prevention of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, and 3) the promotion of abstinence until marriage.

Spectrum Education Group, based in North Logan, Utah, is the ROMI/STARS’s external evaluator. Their role is to assess student growth in regard to the “critical change factors.” Spectrum² employed a pre-post-test design to measure STARS’s students’ knowledge and behaviors. Results of the data analysis reported by Spectrum reflect that:

- There was a 19.4% student gain pre- to post-test on the test items related to the prevention of STDs;
- There was an increase of 20.2% pre- to post-test related to the prevention of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
- There was a 15.2% gain pre- to post-test on the assessment items related to students’ commitment to remaining abstinent until marriage.

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Studies from CDC and Others Confirm Effectiveness of Abstinence-Centered Education

Additionally, Spectrum reports that STARS provided abstinence instruction to 1,109 students for 2008-2009 (the most recent data available) – more than twice as many students as they had originally proposed serving for this period.

“The quantitative data that indicate a growth in student knowledge and change in behavior and anecdotal data from STARS’s administration, staff and participants demonstrate that the program has had a positive impact at all levels,” according to Claudia Edmondson, Ph.D., who served as the project evaluator for Spectrum.

To enhance the effectiveness of the STARS program, McAdoo adds that ROMI also provides workshops for parents who want support in talking to their teens about sex. Parents across all ethics, demographic and political groups prefer abstinence-centered education over comprehensive sex education by a margin of 2:1 according to a 2007 Zogby³ survey.

“We know that parents are the best source of guidance and information about sexual behaviors for their teens and we are committed to reaching out in a positive way to help teens make healthy choices, not only about their sexuality, but about their future as well,” McAdoo said.

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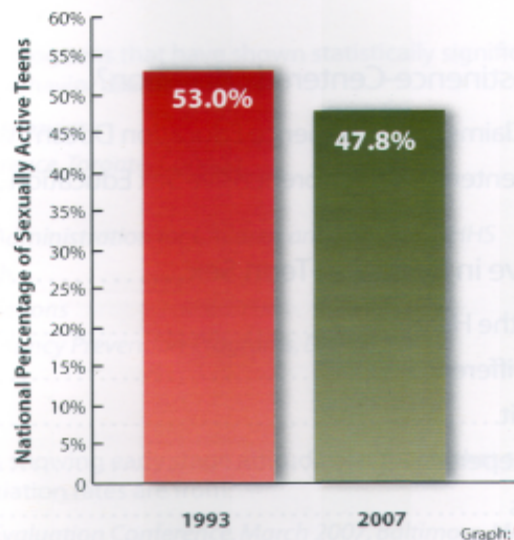
¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Fact sheet for public health personnel: Male latex condoms and sexually transmitted diseases*. (Retrieved April 23, 2009 from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchstp/od/condoms.pdf>).

² Spectrum Consulting: Education Evaluation and Research. *Evaluation report 2008-2009; P/R Award: 90AE169*. <http://www.spectrumconsulting.com>

³ Zogby International. *Survey of Nationwide Parents of Children Age 10-16, May 2007*. <http://www.zogby.com>

Redemption Outreach Ministries International, Inc. (ROMI), founded in 2004, is a nonprofit organization guided by a vision to positively impact central city communities (CCC) in Jackson, Mississippi by offering residents spiritual guidance and social services to better enable them to make healthy life choices.

Significant Trends



Notable Quotes

Douglas Kirby, leading comprehensive sex education researcher and author of *Emerging Answers 2007*, states in his published research of *Reducing the Risk*², a comprehensive sex education program:

*"Even though the curriculum was designed to reduce unprotected intercourse, and placed considerable emphasis both on abstinence and using birth control, it (the program, *Reducing the Risk*) clearly had a greater impact on delaying sexual initiation than on increasing birth control... this suggests that it may actually be easier to delay the onset of intercourse than to increase contraceptive practice."*

Dr. Miguel A. Martinez-Gonzalez, Professor and Chair, Department of Preventive Medicine, University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain states:

"Thailand (experienced) an increase in STI (sexually transmitted infections) among its youth despite extensive promotion of condoms... In Spain STIs are also on the rise, even though the use of condoms among its youth is the highest in Europe. Recent studies in leading science journals show that condoms have not been effective as a primary prevention strategy to tackle the AIDS epidemic in Africa."³

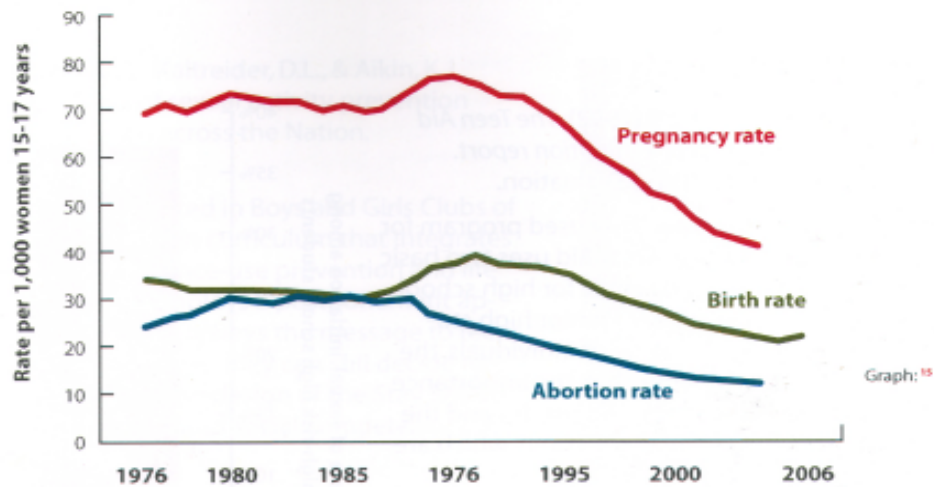
¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2008). *Trends in the prevalence of sexual behaviors, national YRBS: 1991-2007*. Retrieved April 23, 2009 from <http://www.cdc.gov/yrbss>

² Kirby, D., Barth, R. P., Leland, N., & Fetro, J. V. (1991). *Reducing the Risk: Impact of a new curriculum on sexual risk-taking*. *Family Planning Perspectives*, 23(6), 253-263.

³ *The challenge of AIDS*. (2009, April 8). *The Economist*.

Abstinence Works 2009

Significant Trends



Pregnancy, birth and abortion rates for teenagers

Key Findings From 2007 Zogby Poll¹⁶

- The overwhelmingly majority of parents want their teens to be abstinent until they are married.
- Parents prefer abstinence education over comprehensive sex education by a 2 to 1 margin.
- At least 8 in 10 parents support the overall approach of abstinence education.
- At least 8 in 10 parents support the core teaching components of abstinence education.
- Most parents reject comprehensive sex education, which focuses on promoting and demonstrating contraceptive use.
- 9 out of 10 parents want teens to be taught about contraception in a manner that is consistent with the approach of abstinence education.

¹⁵ National Vital Statistics Reports, vol 56 no.7 2007

¹⁶ Zogby Survey of Nationwide Parents of Children Age 10-16, May 2007