



August 6, 2008

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation
370 L'Enfant Promenade SW
Washington, DC 20447
Attn: OPRE Reports Clearance Officer

To Whom It May Concern:

Through its work as an independent, not-for-profit organization focused on sexual and reproductive health research, policy analysis and public education in the United States and internationally, the Guttmacher Institute has developed and analyzed a great deal of information on adolescent sexual behavior, unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, and programs designed to address teenage sexual and reproductive health. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the data collection phase of the Administration for Children and Families' upcoming Evaluation of Pregnancy Prevention Approaches study.

Program evaluations can be extremely useful in gauging the effectiveness of organized interventions that differ widely in content, type of intervention, group served, and breadth and comprehensiveness of focus. Carefully conducted studies, such as the evaluation by Mathematica Policy Research of 11 Section 510-funded abstinence education programs, provide significant insight into what strategies work well with adolescents. ACF's evaluation of four program strategies aimed at older adolescents—defined as Abstinence-until-Marriage Education, Abstinence-based Education, Sex Education and STD/HIV Education and Prevention—could be such a worthwhile endeavor, and we are pleased to note that these strategies will be tested experimentally using random assignment methods. Beyond that, it is critically important that the research design be unbiased with respect to any of the four strategies, which too often are pitted against one another politically. The entire ACF study must be evidence-based and employ the highest standards of evaluation research or it will be of little value to the field.

With regard to the information to be collected during the initial phase of the project, we urge ACF to reach out to a wide range of pregnancy prevention programs and experts. Currently, this phase appears to be focused on in-school pregnancy prevention approaches. And while it calls for interviews with 50 school administrators, little information is provided about the range of researchers, policy experts, program directors and program staff that will be consulted. The data collection should encompass a broad range of programs and perspectives, including those of community- and faith-based organizations.

We thank ACF for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon L. Camp".

Sharon L. Camp, Ph.D.
President and CEO

Advancing sexual and reproductive health worldwide through research, policy analysis and public education

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

September 8, 2008

Sharon L. Camp, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Guttmacher Institute
1301 Connecticut Avenue NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

Dr. Camp:

Thank you for your comments on the data collection phase of the upcoming Evaluation of Pregnancy Prevention Approaches.

Your letter emphasizes the importance of ensuring that the entire study be evidence-based and employ the highest standards of evaluation research. This is our intention.

Your letter urges ACF to reach out to a wide range of pregnancy prevention programs and experts during the initial phase of the project, not limited to in-school approaches but including community- and faith-based organizations. This is also our intention.

I appreciate your interest in this important work. Please let us know if you have additional comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Naomi Goldstein" followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

Naomi Goldstein, Director
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation