

**UNITED STATES: "New Spending for a Wider Range of Sex Education"
New York Times (05.11.10):: Roni Caryn Rabin**

President Obama's health care overhaul will provide \$375 million in comprehensive sex education grants to states over five years. Under the new law, PREP (Personal Responsibility Education Program) will encourage students to delay sexual activity but to use protection if they are already sexually active. Lessons on healthy relationships, financial literacy, and other life skills also are included in the program.

Alongside PREP is roughly \$50 million a year for abstinence programs. However, unlike the sex education grants, the abstinence funds will require a state match of \$3 for every \$4 in federal funds.

Supporters of abstinence-only education say Obama's plan is misguided and goes against the desires of most parents. "Over 90 percent of parents want kids to be taught to abstain until they at least finish high school, and the comprehensive education curricula don't do that - they pretty much normalize teen sexual activity," said Robert Rector, senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

But others are delighted with the new law. "The fact that you have the federal government committed to this and putting some money behind it is really significant," said Laurie Rubiner, vice president for public policy and advocacy at Planned Parenthood Federation of America. "For years, the only thing offered by the federal government was money for programs that were proven to be unsuccessful in the area of sex education."

"While we would all like and hope and prefer that young people abstain from having sex, that is not what many young people, unfortunately, are doing," Rubiner said.

Almost half of the 19 million new STD diagnoses annually are among people ages 15-24, CDC data show. A recent study found one in four teenage girls have an STD.