



### Did You Know...?

The State of Hawai'i currently ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation for teen pregnancy (HYRBS, 2011) and has had historically high rates for chlamydia infections among 15-24 year olds.

In response to these high rates, the University of Hawai'i – CDS, along with collaborative partners ALU LIKE, Inc., and Planned Parenthood of Hawai'i, have developed a teen pregnancy and STI prevention curriculum designed specifically for Hawai'i youth.

More information on the curriculum can be accessed at: [www.cds.hawaii.edu/ponochoices/](http://www.cds.hawaii.edu/ponochoices/)

## Parent Night Follow-up Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This is to inform you that this semester, your child will be studying teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention as part of their health education. We will use a curriculum called **Pono Choices: A Culturally Responsive Teen Pregnancy and STI Prevention Program**. The Pono Choices curriculum has been developed with funding from the federal Office of Adolescent Health through the University of Hawai'i's Center on Disability Studies (UH-CDS). This is the first teen pregnancy and STI prevention curriculum developed exclusively for youth in Hawai'i. The developers of the curriculum come from ALU LIKE, Inc., UH-CDS, and Planned Parenthood of Hawai'i.

**We are sorry we missed you at the Parent Night that was held on \_\_\_\_\_.** The Pono Choices curriculum is comprised of 10 lessons and will include information about abstinence, sexually transmitted infections, birth control methods, refusal skills (how to refuse in a pressure situation), decision-making, recognizing traits of healthy and unhealthy relationships, reproductive anatomy, and puberty. The curriculum introduces students to Hawaiian cultural terms, practices, and concepts that stress positive character development, including making "pono" choices. Below is a description of the types of activities that will take place:

- **Goals and Dreams** encourages adolescents to consider their goals for the future and think about how an unintended pregnancy might get in the way of attaining those goals.
- **Locally produced videos** will be used to reinforce the lessons students will be learning. These include medically accurate terminology on anatomy and puberty as well as HIV and STIs, and they demonstrate making good decisions to protect sexual health.
- **Role-play scenarios** are designed to provide students with the confidence and skills necessary to refuse unwanted sexual pressure. Role-playing is also used to introduce a variety of ways in which the prevention skills learned in this program can be implemented in real-life situations.
- **Prevention Skills** includes effective communication as an essential skill emphasized in the Pono Choices curriculum to prevent an unwanted pregnancy or STI. In Module 8 of the 10-module curriculum, students learn how to put a condom on using a wooden demonstrator made specifically for health instruction. This is included as part of the lesson on preventing STIs.

This curriculum meets the Hawai'i State Board of Education Sexual Health Education policy (see back) where abstinence is stressed as the only 100% effective method to avoid pregnancy and STIs.

Sincerely,

## **Policy 103.5**

### **Hawai'i State Board of Education Sexual Health Education Policy June 2015**

In order to help students make decisions that promote healthy behaviors, the Department of Education shall provide sexual health education to include age appropriate, medically accurate, health education that:

- (1) Includes education on abstinence, contraception, and methods of infection prevention to prevent unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection, including human immunodeficiency virus;
- (2) Helps students develop relationships and communication skills to form healthy relationships that are based on mutual respect and affection and are free from violence, coercion, and intimidation;
- (3) Helps students develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, and stress management to make healthy decisions about sexuality and relationships;
- (4) Encourages student to communicate with their parents, guardians and/or other trusted adults about sexuality; and
- (5) Informs students of available community resources.

Instruction will emphasize that abstention from sexual intercourse is the surest way to prevent unintended pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, and consequent emotional distress.

A description of the curriculum utilized by the school shall be made available to parents and shall be posted on the school's website prior to the start of any instruction. A student shall be excused from sexual health instruction only upon the prior written request of the student's parent or legal guardian. A student may not be subject to disciplinary action, academic penalty or other sanction if the student's parent or legal guardian makes such written request.

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