

Welcome to the Sexual Health Education Team's Healthy Youth Act Webinar



We will start the presentation at 5:40pm.

While we wait, please take a few moments and complete this survey.

<https://rb.gy/fgh3rs>

(a clickable link is in the chat)

Pioneering the Healthy Youth Act

From the Screen to the Page

Ground Rules

1. Be respectful.
2. This is a space for learning, not debating.
3. Participate to level you feel comfortable with.
4. Please write any questions or comments you have in the chat.
5. Practice self care!

Agenda

- What is the Healthy Youth Act?
- The Current State of Sex Ed
- Three Key Pillars
- Three Key Provisions
- Zine Information
- Closing Remarks

What is the Healthy Youth Act?

And why do we need it?

“A bill that would require any public school in Massachusetts that already chooses to teach sex ed provide a “medically accurate, age-appropriate, comprehensive sexual health education.””¹

1. Healthy Youth Act Coalition. (2021). *The bill*. Healthy Youth Act Coalition. <https://www.healthyyouthact.org/the-bill.html>

Mentis #1

(and giveaway!)

What word do you associate
with your sex ed
experience?

<https://www.menti.com/cey9d3jtrp> **CODE: 9604 1025**



Sex Ed at a Glance

- Currently, Massachusetts does not require schools to teach sex education.²
- MA is not one of the **28** states that mandate abstinence be stressed.
- It is not one of the **18** states that requires sex ed be medically accurate.
- MA is not one of the **11** states that mandate LGBTQ+ inclusivity, just neutrality. Meanwhile **6** states mandate discriminatory conversations about LGBTQ+ individuals.

2. Lindberg, L. D. & Kantor, L. M. (2021). *Adolescents' receipt of sex education in a nationally representative sample, 2011–2019*. Guttmacher Institute. [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(21\)00444-4/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(21)00444-4/fulltext)

Three Key Pillars

Comprehensive Sex Ed is...

1. Medically Accurate and Age Appropriate
2. Consent Based
3. LGBTQ+ Inclusive

Medically Accurate and Age Appropriate

- Students should learn material that is **appropriate for their age** and **factually accurate**.
 - You wouldn't teach a kindergartener calculus, sex education is no different!
- Teach information that is recognized as accurate and objective by leading public health organizations and agencies and, if relevant, published in peer-reviewed journals.³

3. Healthy Youth Act Coalition. (2021). *The bill*. Healthy Youth Act Coalition. <https://www.healthyyouthact.org/the-bill.htm>

Consent Based

- Teach students the necessary skills to recognize and prevent dating violence/partner abuse.⁴
 - 10% of MA high school students have experienced sexual assault
 - 7% of MA high school students have experienced physical dating violence
 - Misinformation about sex and sexual health can often be used as a tool to aid abuse and violence
- HYA requires that schools cover necessary relationship and communication skills needed to form healthy relationships
 - Free of violence, coercion, and intimidation
 - Make healthy decisions about relationships and sexuality
 - Affirmative, conscious, voluntary consent

4. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *Youth online: High school YRBS 2019 results*. CDC. <https://bit.ly/3K5RBWW>

LGBTQ+ Inclusive

- Currently, our schools' health classes are **failing** LGBTQ+ Youth
- **81%** of LGBTQ+ youth in MA learn nothing about LGBTQ topics in sex ed.⁵
 - They are disproportionately likely to experience STIs, sexual violence, and physical dating violence
 - Over 50% of them reported being bullied for their orientation or gender identity
- HYA would require health classes to teach age-appropriate material about gender identity and sexual orientation for all students.
 - Also provide students with information about LGBTQ+-friendly resources and support services.

What Comprehensive Sex Ed is NOT

- Heteronormative
- Exclusionary towards anyone
- Abstinence only
- Pornographic
- Speeding up if and when people decide to engage in sexual activity
- A single lesson at a single grade level
- Scare tactics
- Ashamed of accurate terminology
- Uncomfortable

“In 1990, the Massachusetts Board of Education approved a policy that: [U]rges local school districts to create programs which make instruction about AIDS/HIV available to every Massachusetts student at every grade level. These programs should be developed in a manner which respects local control over education and involves parents and representatives of the community. The Board believes that AIDS/HIV prevention education is most effective when integrated into a comprehensive health education and human services program.”⁶

So... has this policy impacted us today?

6. SIECUS State Profile. (2009). *Massachusetts sexuality education and law policy*. SIECUS.
<https://siecus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/MASSACHUSETTS07.pdf#:~:text=In%201990%2C%20the%20Massachusetts%20Board.student%20at%20every%20grade%20level>

Mentis #2

(and giveaway!)

What (if anything) did you learn about HIV/AIDS in your sex ed classes?

<https://www.menti.com/cey9d3jtrp> **CODE: 9604 1025**



Three Key Provisions

Comprehensive Sex Ed...

1. Strengthens parental consent
2. Emphasizes media literacy
3. Represents popular consensus

Strengthens Parental Consent

- Strengthens provisions to ensure that all parents learn what their children will be taught in sex ed.
- Notified about opt-out opportunities in timely manner.
- Information provided in multiple languages.

Emphasizes Media Literacy

- Students overwhelmingly learn about sex and relationships from the media in spaces that aren't always educational, accurate, or devoid of stereotypes.
 - Rarely given time to process it or discuss the impact of misrepresentations.
- HYA will require health classes to incorporate opportunities to analyze societal and media messages.

Represents Popular Consensus

- Current guidelines have not been updated since 1999 with no guarantee that students will be learning updated, factual content.
- An overwhelming majority of MA parents agree: our children should be learning comprehensive, accurate information in sex ed.⁷
 - **92** percent of registered Massachusetts voters said they believe students should receive sex education in high school and **89** percent agreed that sex education should include information about how students can stay healthy should they choose to become sexually active

7. Rayburn, J. (Dir.). (2018). Attitudes of Massachusetts voters. EMC Research.

https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/uploads/filer_public/98/ef/98effd07-0700-4576-8a16-e513700fb426/healthy_youth_lobbying_toolkit_final.pdf

Mentis #3

(and giveaway!)

How would the Healthy Youth Act have helped to improve your sex ed experience?

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Zine Time!

Contact Us

For Zine Submissions, please email Alyvia Norris at anorris@fenwayhealth.org by **February 24th**.

Please use the subject line “**Zine Submissions**”.

You will receive confirmation of receipt for your submission within 5 business days. If you haven't received this confirmation please email again.

If you are under 18 you will need parental/guardian permission to participate unless submitted anonymously



Questions?

Thank You!

Sources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). *Youth online: High school YRBS 2019 results*. CDC. <https://bit.ly/3K5RBWW>

GLSEN State Snapshot. (2019). *School climate for LGBTQ students in Massachusetts*. GLSEN. https://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/Massachusetts-Snapshot-2019_1.pdf

Healthy Youth Act Coalition. (2021). *The bill*. Healthy Youth Act Coalition. <https://www.healthyouthact.org/the-bill.html>

Lindberg, L. D. & Kantor, L. M. (2021). *Adolescents' receipt of sex education in a nationally representative sample, 2011–2019*. Guttmacher Institute. [https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X\(21\)00444-4/fulltext](https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(21)00444-4/fulltext)

Rayburn, J. (Dir.). (2018). Attitudes of Massachusetts voters. EMC Research. https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/uploads/filer_public/98/ef/98effd07-0700-4576-8a16-e513700fb426/healthy_youth_lobbying_toolkit_final.pdf

SIECUS State Profile. (2009). *Massachusetts sexuality education and law policy*. SIECUS. <https://siecus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/MASSACHUSETTS07.pdf#:~:text=In%201990%2C%20the%20Massachusetts%20Board,student%20at%20every%20grade%20level>

The SIECUS State Profiles. (2020a). *Massachusetts's sex ed snapshot*. SIECUS. <https://siecus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Massachusetts-PDF-1.pdf>

The SIECUS State Profiles. (2020b). *Sex ed state law and policy chart*. SIECUS. https://siecus.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/SIECUS-2020-Sex-Ed-State-Law-and-Policy-Chart_May-2020-3.pdf