DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
330 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447

DATE: April 11, 2006

TO: State Coordinators
Title V, Section 510 State Abstinence Education Program

FROM: Harry Wilson, Associate Commissioner
Family and Youth Services Bureau

SUBJECT: Partnering with ACF to Promote Abstinence Until Marriage

Thank you for your work to promote abstinence until marriage in your State. As the Associate Commissioner of the Family and Youth Services Bureau, I speak not only for myself, but also for the Division of Abstinence Education staff in saying that we are excited to partner with States to reduce the rates of out of wedlock births among our most vulnerable youth.

I am writing to clarify that the State Abstinence Education grant program funds States that are committed to promoting abstinence-until-marriage education as defined by Title V, Section 510 of the Social Security Act. The congressional mandate for these programs is to educate young people, and to provide support for teen decisions to postpone sexual activity until marriage.

Since communicating abstinence until marriage to various target populations requires a number of different approaches, activities may include adult and peer mentoring, school programs (before, during, or after school) and parent education groups to promote abstinence from sexual activity until marriage. However, all proposed program activities and curricula used must be consistent with the definitions of abstinence education pursuant to A-H of Section 510.

Curricula must present a clear abstinence until marriage message and may not contain any material inconsistent with any of the A-H elements. Material must not promote contraception and/or condom use and may not promote, encourage, or support sexual activity outside or marriage.

As recipients of State Abstinence Education grants, States must comply with these requirements. Staff in the Division of Abstinence Education are monitoring programs in both the State and community-based programs for compliance with these issues.

Thank you for your continuing commitment to helping our youth make the healthiest choice. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact Robin McDonald at (202) 401-5756 or Annie Miller at (202) 401-6959.

cc: Jeffrey S. Trimbath, Director, Division of Abstinence Education
Robin Y. McDonald, Interim Coordinator, Title V, Section 510 State Abstinence
Catherine Wade, Title V, Section 510 Grants Specialist