

# ACYF/FYSB

Abstinence Education Grant Program

Medical Accuracy Guidance



## **AEGP Medical Accuracy Resource Guidance**

Section 510 of the Social Security Act requires all States to certify that “all abstinence education materials that are presented as factual be grounded in scientific research.” This guidance provides a working definition of medical accuracy as well as a tip sheet for a medical accuracy review process as well as resources for additional guidance, instruction, and scientifically supported information to assist states in conducting medical accuracy reviews.

### **Potential for Review**

We ask all grantees to monitor and document the medical accuracy review process. FYSB may request documentation of medical accuracy reviews from grantees as a resource to both help monitor existing program and improve the overall Teen Pregnancy Prevention Division medical accuracy review process.

### **ACF Liability**

ACF does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, link, product, or process disclosed in information included herein. ACF does not intend to provide specific medical advice, but we may provide grantees with information. ACF encourages all grantees to consult qualified health care providers and or medical evaluators when assessing programmatic medical accuracy.

## **Defining Medical Accuracy and the Legislative Requirements**

### **Medical Accuracy**

Medical accuracy means that medical information must be “verified or supported by the weight of research conducted in compliance with accepted scientific methods and published in peer-reviewed journals, where applicable, or be comprised of information that leading professional organizations and agencies with relevant expertise in the field recognize as accurate, objective and complete.” If States choose to teach values-based perspectives, it is permissible under this statute. However, a State may not present information as factual when it reflects a value or opinion instead of fact. The requirement for States receiving funding under section 510 of the Social Security Act is that they will certify that “all abstinence education materials that are presented as factual will be grounded in scientific research.” This certification pertains to any materials presented by sub-awardees of the State as well. The 2010 Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) included specific instructions for certifying medical accuracy.

### **Section 317P(c)(2) of the Public Health Service Act**

Mass produced educational materials that are specifically designed to address sexually transmitted diseases/infections (STDs/STIs) are required by section 317P(c)(2) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. §247b-17(c)(2)) to contain medically accurate information regarding the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of condoms in preventing the STDs/STIs the materials are designed to address. In general, information on contraceptives, if included, must be medically accurate, objective, complete, and should include information on the effectiveness or lack of effectiveness of the type of contraception discussed in the curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

Applicants must sign the assurance contained in *Appendix B* of the AEGP Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and submit it with their application for funding.

Should ACYF/FYSB find medically inaccurate information during the review process, or at any time during the grant project period(s), grantees will be required to correct the inaccuracies.

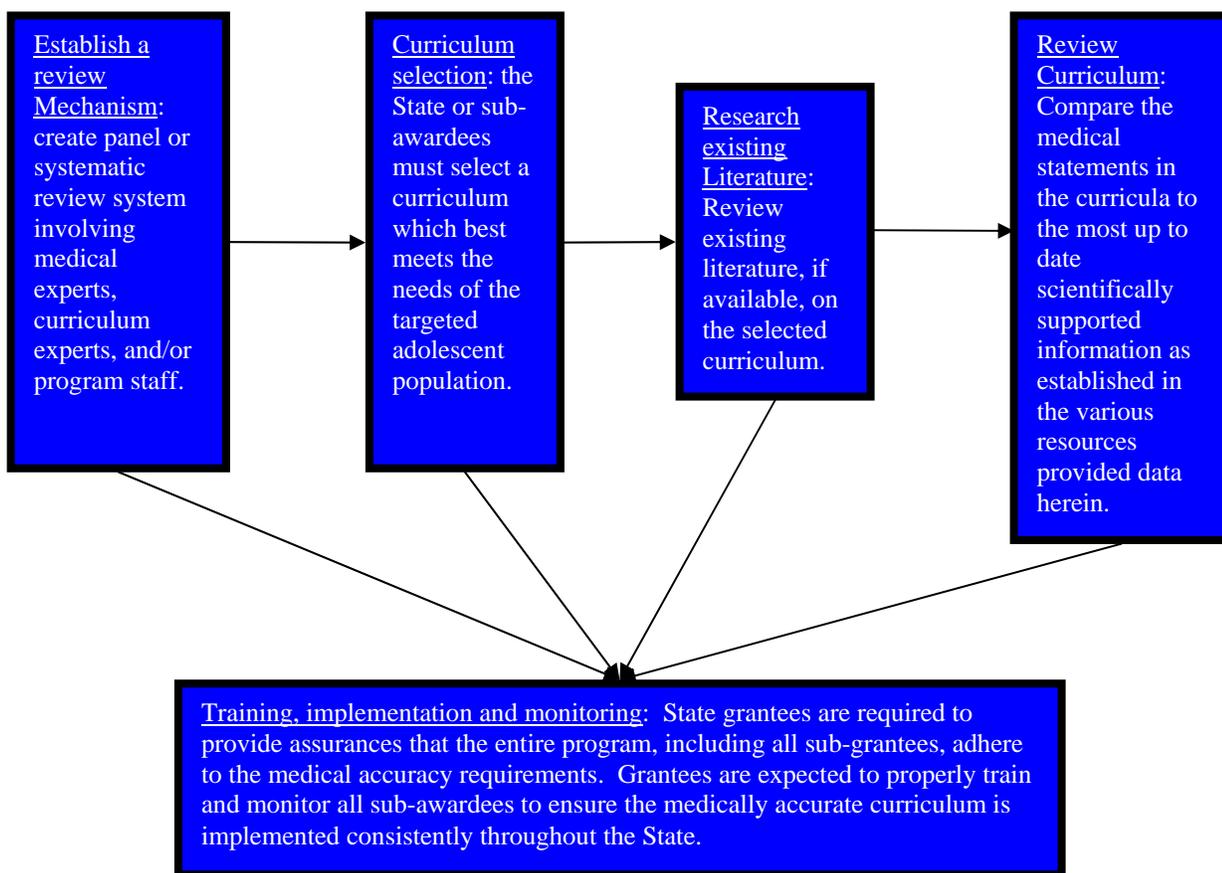
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<sup>1</sup> For more information please see: U.S. Government Accountability Office Decision V-3018128, “Abstinence Education: Applicability of Section 317P of the Public Health Service Act.” 2006.

## Tip Sheet

1. **Establish a review mechanism:** One systematic way to review materials is using panels of experts. We recommend creating a panel to establish a review system involving medical experts, curriculum experts, and/or program staff. You may wish to ask sub grantees to establish panels at the program level. If the requirement is “passed-on” to the local program level, the State grantee should specify minimum panel composition requirement(s) that address how to set up a panel and who is qualified to serve as a “medical accuracy panel reviewer.” Requirements might address the number of panelists, meeting procedures, proposed panelists’ credentials, certifications, licenses, organizational affiliations, etc. As a monitoring check on this, States may require the sub-grantee to submit a panel membership roster and/or provide minutes or summaries of panel meetings. There should be some documentary evidence that local programs deliberate on the accuracy of their instructional program via these proposed panels.
2. **Curriculum selection:** the State or sub-awardees must select a curriculum which best meets the needs of the targeted adolescent population(s). Selection should be justified and open so that sub-grantees and others are aware of approval processes, proposed requirements to constitute panels, and other procedural guidance including “accuracy” review panel meeting notices and minutes. Some states may have regulations that mandate openness or transparency in these types of decisions by publicly funded entities. Grantees should adhere to those internal agency obligations and relevant state regulations that govern advisory groups.
3. **Research existing literature:** Review existing literature, if available, on the selected curriculum. Many curricula for pregnancy prevention have been reviewed and findings are frequently available. Grantees are encouraged to consider due diligence and at a minimum review and/or validate publishers’ claims regarding their curriculum content.
4. **Review curriculum:** Compare the medical statements of fact in the curricula including: texts, supplements, workbooks, and other educational materials (videos, flyers, handouts, posters, flash cards, etc.) to the most up to date scientifically supported information as established in the various resources provided. Where appropriate, we encourage you to consult directly with program developers or publishers to ensure medical accuracy.
5. **Training, implementation and monitoring:** State grantees are required to provide assurances that the entire program, including all grantees, adhere to the medical accuracy requirements. Grantees are expected to properly train and monitor all sub-awardees to ensure that a medically accurate curriculum is implemented consistently throughout the State. It may be appropriate to train sub-awardees on the panel review procedures, or obtaining other evidence to support accuracy reviewing

### Tip Sheet Flow Chart Format



## **Resources**

The list of resources is available to assist grantees in verifying medical information or making recommendations for sub-awardees regarding the medical information in their program materials. Suggested resources include fact sheets, publications, news releases, reports and websites of government agencies.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

- Adolescent Health Related Information:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/index.htm>
- Adolescent Health:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/AdolescentHealth/index.htm>
- Sexual Risk Behaviors:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/sexualbehaviors/index.htm>
- Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>
- National Prevention Information Network:  
<http://www.cdcnpin.org/>
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases:  
<http://www.cdcnpin.org/scripts/std/index.asp>
- Parents Matter:  
<http://www.cdcnpin.org/parentsmatter/index.asp>
- Reproductive Health Data and Statistics (including teen pregnancy):  
[http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/Data\\_Stats/index.htm#TeenPreg](http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/Data_Stats/index.htm#TeenPreg)
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases Related Information (fact sheets, treatment guidelines, reports, etc):  
<http://www.cdc.gov/std/>
- Teen Pregnancy Related Information:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/TeenPregnancy/index.htm>

### **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**

- Sexually Transmitted Diseases Related Information:  
<http://health.nih.gov/topic/SexuallyTransmittedDiseases/WomensHealth>
- Teenage Pregnancy Related Information:  
<http://health.nih.gov/topic/TeenagePregnancy/ReproductionandSexualHealth>
- U.S. National Library of Medicine (Medline Plus):  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>
- Birth Control:  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/birthcontrol.html>
- Teenage Pregnancy:  
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/teenagepregnancy.html>

### **WomensHealth.Gov**

- Birth Control Related Information:  
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/birth-control-methods.cfm>
- Menstruation and Menstrual Cycle Related Information:  
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/menstruation.cfm>
- Sexually Transmitted Infections Related Information:  
<http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/sexually-transmitted-infections.cfm>

### **MedicalAccuracy.org**

<http://www.medicalaccuracy.org/internet-resources>