



For Immediate Release:

Ascend Applauds HHS in Ending the Ineffective Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) Program

(Washington, DC) -Ascend applauds the decision by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) to cut short, by two years, the failed TPP program which will be required to end June 2018. After a review of findings by HHS, the program, generously funded under the Obama administration since 2010, has simply failed to deliver expected outcomes despite its nearly billion-dollar price tag.

TPP programs were promoted on an “approved” list by the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) and showcased as *model* programs that could be implemented with confidence. The OAH website stated, “*Evidence-based programs can be expected to produce positive results consistently.*”^[1] In good faith, many schools and communities across the country implemented these programs but did not experience the “positive results” promised. In fact, in replicating these “evidenced-based” programs, 80% of students fared no better or even worse than those who did not receive programs. Additionally, three programs were found to put teens at greater risk by increasing sexual initiation, pregnancy and oral sex.^[2] And yet, false assertions of success by TPP proponents tout the program as a major contributor to the decline in teen birth rates. However, as HHS leadership notes, the TPP program has reached a mere 1% of the teen population since 2010 and can hardly lay claim to the precipitous drop that has been observed since 1991. Further, a 28% increase in the number of high school students choosing to wait for sex has been documented during this same time period.^[3]

Mary Anne Mosack, Executive Director of Ascend, stated, “We encourage Congress to follow the responsible decision made by HHS to end this failed program by prioritizing the health of youth over special interest groups content to make exaggerated claims of success. By any measure, common sense would dictate that this program does not deserve the continued support of hard earned tax dollars. As President Obama said in his 2009 inaugural address, ‘The question

we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works – ...where the answer is no, programs will end.’ ”

For TPP, the answer is clearly no.

[1] United States Department of Health and Human Services; *The Office of Adolescent Health*. (2015, February 25)

[2] Office of Adolescent Health (2016) *Summary of findings from the TPP program Grantees (FY2010-2014)*. Washington, DC: HHS.(2016). Special issue of American Journal of Public Health explores impacts of Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. American Journal of Public Health: September 2016. 106 (S1):S9-S15.

[3] CDC. (2016). *Youth Online: High School YRBS 2015*.

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Ascend champions youth to make healthy decisions in relationships and life by promoting well being through a primary prevention strategy, and as a national membership and advocacy organization that serves, leads, represents and equips the Sexual Risk Avoidance field.