



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 28, 2012

New York City High Schools Dispensing “Abortion Pill” to Students

Over a dozen New York City high schools are making the “morning after” contraception pill available to their students, under a program initiated by the city’s health department. High schools around the nation have handed out condoms to students for years, but observers said this is the first known case of a school district dispensing the emergency contraceptive, also known as the “abortion pill” because of its ability to cause abortion in women who take it after sex.



“The program, which started last year and now has been instituted at 13 high schools, allows school nurses to give students emergency contraceptive pills, designed to prevent pregnancy following unprotected sex or a contraceptive failure if taken within 72 hours,” reported [Reuters News](#). “It also provides condoms, birth-control pills, and pregnancy testing.”

Health department officials claimed the program, called Connecting Adolescents To Comprehensive Health (CATCH), is designed to battle the teen pregnancy epidemic in the city, where so far hundreds of students have been given the emergency contraceptive pill. “In New York City over 7,000 young women become pregnant by age 17, 90 percent of which are unplanned,” said health department spokeswoman Alexandra Waldhorn in an e-mail justifying the program. “We are committed to trying new approaches, like this pilot program in place since January 2011, to improve a situation that can have lifelong consequences.”

Waldhorn claimed parents had the option of opting their children out of the program, but only one or two percent of parents did so. Joan Malin, president of Planned Parenthood of New York City, said “in an ideal world a teen would consult with a parent or caregivers before becoming sexually active and seeking out birth control,” but a non-involved school official would be just fine also. She emphasized that the program “equips school nurses and other qualified staff to be those responsible adults providing appropriate advice and medical care.”

But some New York officials have expressed their outrage over the presumption of the health department and schools. Reuters reported that Democratic State Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, who represents part of New York City’s South Bronx borough, shot off a letter to Mayor Michael Bloomberg demanding that the program be killed. “It is unconscionable for New York City’s government to implement any program that gives medication to students without the prior authorization of parents,” Crespo wrote.

Individuals and groups in the community spoke out against the program, as well. “Our kids are being targeted and they’re being sold sex,” said Michelle Mulledy, New York state director for [Concerned Women for America](#). “That’s what this is all about, and it needs to stop.”

The Rev. Jason McGuire, executive director of the pro-family [New Yorkers Family Research Foundation](#), said that he was “incensed at the arrogance of this administration. The state is constantly telling parents, ‘We know better than you on how to raise your children.’”



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Even though the 13 schools involved in the program insist they sent letters home to all parents and guardians of students, Valerie Huber of the [National Abstinence Education Association](#) speculated that few parents actually saw the letter. “The first time they are reading about [the program] is in the newspaper,” Huber told Focus on the Family’s [CitizenLink.com](#).

In a joint blog posting, New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan and Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn called the pilot program “tragic and misguided,” charging that it usurps the role of parents as the primary educators and caregivers for their children, “and allows the public school system to substitute its beliefs and values for those of the parents.”

The two Catholic leaders noted that while the state prohibits minors from getting tattoos and piercings without explicit parental consent, when “powerful drugs — with their potentially serious side effects — are involved, we let these young teens do what they want, without a word to their parents.” They added that under New York law 17 is the age of consent, and “parents have a right to know when their daughters are engaged in sexual activity.”



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