



John Santelli Testifies Before Congressional Hearings on Abstinence-Only Programs

John Santelli, MD, Harriet and Robert H. Heilbrunn Professor and chair of the Heilbrunn Department of Population and Family Health, testified at the April 23, 2008 Hearing on Abstinence-Only Programs before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to assess the public health evidence on abstinence-only programs.

In his testimony he outlines the numerous scientific and ethical critiques that have been raised about abstinence-only education for young people. This includes the critiques that abstinence-only-until-marriage as a program goal is out of touch with broad demographic trends toward both an earlier age at first sex and a later age at marriage.

According to statistics, 95 percent of Americans have intercourse prior to marriage, and abstinence-only programs that have been carefully evaluated have failed to demonstrate behavioral results. His testimony urges the committee to encourage policies that will better serve the needs of America's youth and asks Congress to develop policies for improving adolescent reproductive health based on sound scientific evidence and the realities of adolescents' lives.

For Dr. Santelli's complete testimony: www.mailman.hs.columbia.edu/news/pdf/SantelliTestimony041708.pdf