

POLICY ON CONDOM AVAILABILITY IN THE HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to outline guidelines for the availability of condoms in the Holyoke Public Schools. Increasing rates of reported sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, among our community's adolescent population has prompted the need to provide comprehensive sexuality education along with a school based program that makes condoms available to sexually active youth.

Policy: It is the policy of the Holyoke Public Schools to support condom availability to middle school aged and high school students in Holyoke Public Schools. Parents/guardians will be notified of condom availability in the schools and will have the opportunity to deny permission (opt-out) for access to condoms for their student(s).

Condoms will be available through the School Nurses' Health Offices and through the Teen Clinics to students who are Teen Clinic members. Students will receive counseling for condom receipt. Counseling shall include information on abstinence and instruction (verbal and/or written) on proper storage and use of condoms.

This policy is intended as a counter measure to the alarming rates of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections and is being instituted for the protection of the students as an answer to this increase in sexually related problems. This policy does support referral of individual students to appropriate staff and community resources when a student actively seeks out information related to their reproductive health.

Condoms will be obtained free of charge. Supplies for the school availability program will be obtained from the Department of Public Health, also a free service. Information packets included with the condoms from the Department of Public Health will be made available to the student(s).