

Policy Position:

Adopted by the MOASH Board of Directors, May 2017

Condom Availability Programs in Schools



What we stand for:

The Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH) supports condom availability programs¹ in Michigan middle and high schools. It is the right of all people, including young people, to have the tools necessary to control their sexual and reproductive health. In Michigan, it is currently prohibited to distribute contraception, including condoms, to students on public school grounds.² MOASH supports the amendment of this law and the implementation of policy that makes condoms available and accessible to Michigan's young people.

¹ MOASH uses the term "condom availability" as opposed to "condom distribution" to more accurately describe these programs.

² Revised School Code, 1976 PA 451, MCL § 380.1507. Retrieved from [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(m5avgonouxqwrchk2zgkjqc\)\)/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-380-1507](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(m5avgonouxqwrchk2zgkjqc))/mileg.aspx?page=getObject&objectName=mcl-380-1507)

Why we stand for this:

- When provided with medically accurate, evidence-informed, age-appropriate, and comprehensive sexual health education, young people are able to make well-informed decisions about their health and must be given the tools to make the healthiest choices possible.
- Studies show that condom availability: 1) does not increase sexual activity, 2) increases condom use among those having sexual intercourse, and 3) decreases rates of STIs, HIV, and unintended pregnancy.³ Due to current restrictions on condom availability in schools, most Michigan schools are inexperienced in planning and implementing condom availability programs; MOASH is positioned to provide support with this and spearhead relevant research.
- Although minors can legally purchase condoms, young people experience many barriers to accessing contraception (i.e., financial, logistical, social). Schools play an important role in accessibility to all components of health care, including sexual and reproductive health. The availability of condoms in this environment allows for opportunities for intervention (e.g., connection with youth for education/counseling to ensure correct and consistent contraceptive use).
- Expert organizations in the field of adolescent sexual health (i.e., American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American School Health Association, and National Medical Association) have supported these policies as best practice and recommend that condoms be made available to adolescents as part of comprehensive school health programs.⁴

Data and statistics:

- According to the 2015 Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 35.8% of high school students have engaged in sexual intercourse, 8.8% have had sexual intercourse with four or more persons, and 42.8% of those who are sexually active did not use a condom during last sexual intercourse.⁵
- With correct and consistent use, condoms are highly effective in preventing unintended pregnancy and the transmission of HIV and other STIs.⁶
- Schools have a stake in the sexual health of their students. There is a strong link between health status and educational outcomes.⁷
- There are no barriers to educating students about how to effectively use condoms. In Michigan, school districts are not prohibited from teaching about behavioral risk reduction strategies, including the use of condoms, within their sex education program.⁸

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015, May). *Condom Distribution as a Structural-Level Intervention* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/pdf/programresources/guideance/condoms/cdc-hiv-condom-distribution.pdf>

⁴ Kirby, D. B., & Brown, N. L. (1996, Sept 2). Condom Availability Programs in U.S. Schools. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, Guttmacher Institute, 28(5). doi: 10.1363/2819696. Retrieved from <https://www.guttmacher.org/journals/psrh/1996/09/condom-availability-programs-us-schools>

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). *Michigan, High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015* [Data set]. Retrieved from https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?L_ID=MI

⁶ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013). *Condoms and STDs: Fact Sheet for Public Health Personnel* [PDF]. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/condomeffectiveness/docs/Condoms_and_STDS.pdf

⁷ Sorace, D. (2013). *Addressing Sexual Health in Schools: Policy Considerations* [PDF document]. Retrieved from <http://advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/addressing%20sexual%20health%20in%20schools-%20policy%20considerations.pdf>

⁸ Michigan Department of Education. (2013). *A Summary of Legal Obligations and Best Practices: HIV/STI and Sex Education in Michigan Public Schools* [PDF]. Retrieved from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/HIV_and_Sex_Ed_Laws_Chart_Rev_4_2010_345047_7.pdf