FROM: Phyllis Schlafly

68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 (618) 462-5415

RELEASE: APRIL 16, 1982

NEW TITLE X REGULATIONS ABOUT TEEN CLINICS

The Federal Register, ordinarily not considered very sexy reading, has stirred up a storm of controversy with its regulations about sex. Pro and con mail from the public is invited until April 23.

These regulations would require federally-funded teen clinics to notify parents within ten working days after their teenage girls under 18 are given prescription contraceptive devices (such as the pill or the IUD). The regulations were issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in compliance with Title X legislation passed by Congress last year.

The regulations allow exceptions to this requirement only when "the project director determines that notification would have adverse physical health consequences for the minor." This exception is defined as cases where there is evidence of child abuse, sexual abuse, incest, or other physical harm; it does not include ordinary disciplinary actions. The regulations would also require federally-funded teen clinics to obey state laws that require parental consent for giving contraceptives to minors.

HHS Secretary Richard Schweiker explained when he announced the regulations that it is "paradoxical" that a child may not go on a school field trip or be absent from class even one day without written parental permission, but drugs and devices with potentially serious health consequences can now be prescribed for a child without parental knowledge.

Those opposing the regulations argue that the regulations are a "smokescreen for imposing certain moral attitudes on all" and an effort to "turn back the clock" on sexual attitudes. They claim that "the idea that we're all going to have a Robert Young, 'Father Knows Best' kind of family is just not reality."

Eunice K. Shriver, a sister of the famous Kennedy brothers, has emerged as an outspoken supporter of the Schweiker regulations. She says, "I have found that counseling the child without the parent is empty and futile. It perpetuates misunderstandings and widens the gulf between generations. What is more, it does not work."

Many parents believe that easy, anonymous access to contraceptives by teenagers is a major cause of premarital sex, illegitimate pregnancies, venereal disease, and abortions. If teenagers use contraceptives in the belief that they are safe from pregnancy, the incidence of pre-marital sexual activity dramatically increases. The result is more and more mistakes, resulting in more and more unplanned pregnancies, more abortions, and more VD.

The fear of early, unwanted, illegitimate pregnancy is one of every teenage girl's natural defenses against invitations and pressures to engage in pre-marital sex. The anonymous availability of contraceptives from the "government," without her parents' knowledge, dismantles that defense. So, why should a girl say "no"?

The moral law applies equally to both males and females; but in the real world, girls pay a far bigger price for pre-marital sexual activity. Girls need all the psychological defenses that family, church, school -- and a fear of the consequences -- can offer.

It is good to be afraid of doing an act that will cause pain and lasting harm. It is good for a child to be afraid of putting his hand on the stove because it will burn.

Devices from teen clinics may protect a girl from pregnancy (if she uses them correctly and doesn't forget). But they do not protect her against the other dangers of pre-marital sex, such as venereal disease (especially the incurable varieties), cervical cancer that results from too-early sexual intercourse with different partners, damage to future wanted pregnancies from abortions and VD, damage to a future stable marriage, and unhappy psychological effects.

The myth is widely propagated that contraceptives and abortions for teenagers are needed because "everybody's doing it anyway." The twelfth annual survey published by Who's Who of American High School Students shows that the high achievers are not "doing it." The poll shows that 90% believe in traditional marriage; 73% have never had sexual intercourse; nearly half believe that pre-marital sex is not acceptable under any circumstanmces; and 90% have never used drugs.

It is wrong to design policies and classes for teens on the false assumption that all students are sexually active, thereby bringing peer pressure on all students to conform to the crowd. Students should be encouraged to imitate the moral lives of the high achievers rather than to sink to the level of the lowest common denominator.