

Joint News Release

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Media contacts:

Delia Hernández, OHA, phd.communications@dhsosha.state.or.us

Marc Siegel, ODE, marc.siegel@state.or.us

OHA, ODE unveil online tool to prevent youth sexual violence

[An online mapping tool is available](#) to help communities in Oregon assess factors among adolescents that can lead to risky sexual practices and increase the risk of sexual violence.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) teamed up to introduce the Oregon Sexual Violence Prevention Resource Map that displays information to promote skills-based learning to prevent sexual violence. The map tool is part of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant to help its partner organizations prevent injuries, such as sexual violence.

According to the data obtained by the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey, one in eight students, one in five female students, and one in five youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender reported they were pressured to engage in unwanted sexual activity.

“We hope this set of tools helps begin or continue a discussion in schools and communities about the importance of sex education and encourages schools to actively engage in these conversations,” said Laura Chisholm, manager of the Injury and Violence Prevention Program, based at the OHA Public Health Division.

Skills-based learning can reduce high-risk sexual behavior, which leads to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases but also increases risk of sexual violence. OHA and ODE are providing tools that support school districts to implement sex education that teaches:

- Skills-based approaches to safe, respectful dating.
- Building healthy relationships.
- Recognizing signs of emotional, psychological and physical abuse.
- Respecting each other’s differences.
- Identifying trusted adults to talk to about health, relationships and safety.
- Communicating personal boundaries.

In Oregon, local school districts are required to work with their communities to develop a plan of instruction that addresses these topics from kindergarten to 12th grade. OHA’s Public Health Division worked with ODE to survey local school districts and develop the mapping tool for local communities to better understand sexual health data, local resources and education.

“Sexual violence prevention education is an absolute necessity if we are truly committed to the well-being and academic success of our students and community,” says Kristin Blomberg, Erin’s Law teacher on special assignment at the Hillsboro School District.

In accordance with Erin’s Law (2015) and the Healthy Teen Relationships Act (2011), school districts have already begun rolling out elementary and secondary instruction that focuses on sexual violence prevention as part of K-12 sex education.

“Providing sex education that teaches healthy relationships and healthy sexuality is one fundamental way that schools, parents, caregivers and communities can make a difference,” Chisholm said.

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