

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, June 21, 2007

Contact: HHS Press Office
(202) 690-6343

HHS Unveils “Parents Speak Up” National Campaign *PSA Campaign, New Web Site Help Parents Talk Kids About Waiting to Have Sex*

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) today unveiled a new campaign encouraging parents to talk to their pre-teen and teenage children about waiting to have sex.

The “Parents Speak Up” National Campaign public service advertising features kids who invite their parents to talk to them about sex, their values, and how waiting can contribute to future success.

“During my time as a pediatrician and a public health official, I’ve learned that parents often need additional tools when dealing with tough issues facing their children,” explained Dr. John Agwunobi, HHS’ assistant secretary for health. “There are few issues tougher or more important to discuss than sex.”

HHS also unveiled the revised www.4parents.gov Web site, which offers parents resources to help parents speak to their kids about a variety of risky behaviors.

“The ‘Parents Speak Up’ campaign was developed based on research that indicates youth look to their parents for guidance when it come to making decisions about sex,” said Dan Schneider, HHS’ acting assistant secretary for children and families. “When families encourage open communication, and teens live in an environment where values are clearly expressed, they are more likely to follow those values.”

In addition to advertising, which includes television, radio, print, outdoor, and interactive banners, the “Parents Speak Up” National Campaign encourages grassroots community involvement. Three Outreach Centers are raising awareness of and support for the campaign in the African American, Hispanic, and Native American communities.

According to a 2005 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey, about one out of every three ninth graders has had sexual intercourse at least once. A 2007 survey by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy found that 60 percent of teens who have had sexual intercourse wish they had waited.