

RESOLUTION

Subject: Support for Education on Puberty and Menstruation

Submitted by: Danielle Graves and Juliana Cobb, MS (University of Louisville School of Medicine)

Referred to: Reference Committee

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Whereas, the passage of SB150, “An Act Relating to Children”, has raised the question of whether teaching students human health-related curriculum, including puberty and menstrual health education, is permitted in Kentucky before 6th grade^{1,2}; and

Whereas, current Kentucky state standards specify that fifth graders should learn the “physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty” but do not require the need to educate students on menstruation³; and

Whereas, 10% of female students experience menarche before age 10 and 53% by age 12, suggesting that a significant proportion of female students' experience menarche before teaching on puberty is required by Kentucky standards⁴; and

Whereas, ACOG standards recommend that pediatricians provide anticipatory guidance on puberty at ages 7 or 8, suggesting that these topics are appropriate for these age groups⁵; and

Whereas, a randomized controlled trial demonstrated that it is more effective to educate girls about puberty directly to improve attitudes, rather than solely educating their parents⁶; and

Whereas, qualitative research on menstrual education suggests that parents rely on the school system for help explaining menstruation and absence of menstrual education can lead to negative developmental experiences for girls relating to puberty and menstruation⁷; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, to ensure that proper elementary school health education in schools should include teaching on the typical course of puberty in adolescents including education on menstruation, that our KMA amend resolution 17-23 to the following:

KMA supports the AMA policy to oppose the sole use of abstinence only education by providing information about condoms, birth control, and other means of preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

KMA supports anticipatory education related to menstruation and puberty for elementary school students.

KMA supports sexual education in schools to include information on sexual assault,

consent communication, and dating violence prevention.

KMA supports sexual education in schools to include reference to non-traditional (LGBTQIA) practices for safe sex, in the interests of equality and prevention of sexually transmitted disease.

KMA will work with appropriate agencies, including but not limited to the public-school system, to ensure that sex education is age-appropriate, evidence-based, led by well-trained individuals, and subject to periodic evaluation and improvement. (*Res 2017-23, 2017 HOD*)

References:

- 1 Kentucky General Assembly. SB150: An Act Relating to Children. Last modified 03/28/2023
- 2 JCPS board fails to make decision on SB 150 - with first day of school looming. The Courier-Journal. Accessed July 27, 2023. <https://www.courier-journal.com/story/news/education/2023/07/25/jcps-board-fails-to-decide-policy-on-sb-150-kentucky-anti-trans-law/70430839007/>
- 3 Kentucky Department of Education. Health Education. *Kentucky Academic Standards*. 2023.
- 4 Gladys M. M. *Trends and Patterns in Menarche in the United States: 1995 through*
 - i. 2013–2017.; 2020. Accessed July 26, 2023.
 - ii. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr146-508.pdf>
- 5 Afsari A, Mirghafourvand M, Valizadeh S, Abbasnezhadeh M, Galeshi M, Fatahi S. The effects of educating mothers and girls on the girls' attitudes toward puberty health: a randomized controlled trial. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*. 2017;29(2). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1515/ijamh-2015-0043>
- 6 2.American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology. Menstruation in Girls and Adolescents: Using the Menstrual Cycle as a Vital Sign.; 2015. Accessed July 26, 2023. <https://www.acog.org/clinical/clinical-guidance/committee-opinion/articles/2015/12/menstruation-in-girls-and-adolescents-using-the-menstrual-cycle-as-a-vital-sign>
- 7 Schmitt ML, Gruer C, Hagstrom C, et al. "It always gets pushed aside:" Qualitative perspectives on puberty and menstruation education in U.S.A. schools. *Frontiers in Reproductive Health*. 2022;4. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3389/frph.2022.101821>

RELEVANT AMA AND AMA-MSS POLICY

Health Education Legislation H-170.988

Our AMA (1) reaffirms current policy which supports the establishment of a comprehensive health education program in the elementary and secondary schools; and (2) encourages state and specialty medical societies to consider the introduction of such model legislation in their state legislatures.