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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Donna Hutten, 301-443-5839 (for questions specific to project activities of the program, program objectives, or the Letter of Intent described above); and Pamela Bell, 301-443-3504 (for grants policy, budgetary, and business questions).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Abstinence-only education programs are one way to educate young people and create an environment within communities that support teen decisions to postpone sexual activity. Between 1991 and 2001, the prevalence of sexual experience decreased 16 percent among high school students (CDC, *MMWR*, September 27, 2002). In 2001, 45.6 percent of high school students reported having had sexual intercourse and 33.4 percent reported having had sexual intercourse within the previous three months (CDC, *MMWR*, June 28, 2002). There are some indications that early sexual intercourse by adolescents can have negative effects on social and psychological development. Research shows that teen pregnancy is linked to a list of risk factors similar to those for other problem behaviors of adolescence, such as alcohol and drug use, violence, delinquency, and school drop-out. Teen parenting is associated with the lack of high school completion and the initiation of a cycle of poverty for mothers. The Department of Health and Human Services established the reduction of teen pregnancies as a priority goal in its 1997 strategic plan. Based on preliminary U.S. birth data for 2002, birth rates for teenagers have continued their steady decline. Overall, the teen birth rate has declined 28 percent since 1990. The birth rates for teenagers 15-17 years and 18-19 years have declined 38 and 18 percent, respectively since 1990 (CDC, *NCHS, Vital Statistics Report*, June 25, 2003).

Consistent with other SPRANS grant programs, MCHB encourages coordination and collaboration between the State agencies administering a Section 510 abstinence education grant and community-based organizations applying for a SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Project grant. Such coordination and collaboration is considered beneficial in promoting complementary efforts between State and community agencies and advancing maternal and child

health. MCHB also encourages collaboration among Federal agencies with an interest in abstinence-only education programs, such as ACF and OPA.

Projects funded through the SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Grant Program share a common definition of "abstinence education" with the Section 510-funded State programs. For purposes of both programs (as well as abstinence education programs funded under the Title XX Adolescent Family Life program), the term "abstinence education" means "an educational or motivational program which—

(A) has as its exclusive purpose, teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity;

(B) teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school age children;

(C) teaches that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other associated health problems;

(D) teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity;

(E) teaches that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;

(F) teaches that bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child's parents, and society;

(G) teaches young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increases vulnerability to sexual advances; and

(H) teaches the importance of attaining self-sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity."

Curriculum developed or selected for implementation in the SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Grants Program must address all eight elements of the Section 510 abstinence education definition and may not be inconsistent with any aspect of that definition.

Authorization: Section 501(a)(2) of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 701(a)(2).

Purpose: The purpose of the SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Grant Program is to provide support to public and private entities for the development and implementation of abstinence education programs for adolescents, ages 12 through 18. This program funds the planning and implementation of community-based, abstinence-only educational

interventions designed to reduce the proportion of adolescents who have engaged in premarital sexual activity, including but not limited to sexual intercourse; reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies among adolescents; and reduce the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases among adolescents.

Specific objectives for the SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education planning and implementation grants are to:

- Support programmatic efforts that foster the development of abstinence-only education for adolescents, ages 12 through 18, in communities across the country.

- Develop and implement abstinence-only programs that target the prevention of teenage pregnancy and premature sexual activity.

- Develop abstinence education approaches that are culturally sensitive and age-appropriate to meet the needs of a diverse audience of adolescents, ages 12 through 18.

- Implement curriculum-based community education programs that promote abstinence decisions to adolescents, ages 12 through 18.

The SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Project Grants Program is complementary to the Title V "Section 510" Abstinence Education Grant Program. Activities funded under the SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Project Grants should enhance the State grantees' efforts to achieve performance goals and objectives established for the existing Section 510 projects in accordance with the requirements of the "Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993" (Public Law 103-62). This Act requires the establishment of measurable goals for Federal programs that can be reported as part of the budgetary process, thus linking funding decisions with performance. While SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Program grantees are not responsible for establishing individual program performance targets, grantees are expected to collect and annually report program data that address the six program performance measures presented in Figure 1. This data collection and reporting is essential to the Agency's efforts to assess program-wide performance and progress towards achieving the performance measure objectives.

Figure 1.—SPRANS Community-Based Abstinence Education Grant Program Performance Measures

1. Proportion of program participants who successfully complete or remain