

Condom Nation: The U.S. Government's Sex Education Campaign from World War I to the Internet

Alexandra M. Lord



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This history of the U.S. Public Health Service's efforts to educate Americans about sex makes clear why federally funded sex education has been haphazard, ad hoc, and often ineffectual.

Since launching its first sex ed program during World War I, the Public Health Service has dominated federal sex education efforts. Alexandra M. Lord draws on medical research, news reports, the expansive records of the Public Health Service, and interviews with former surgeons general to examine these efforts, from early initiatives through the administration of George W. Bush.

Giving equal voice to many groups in America? middle class, working class, black, white, urban, rural, Christian and non-Christian, scientist and theologian?Lord explores how federal officials struggled to create sex education programs that balanced cultural and public health concerns. She details how the Public Health Service left an indelible mark on federally and privately funded sex education programs through partnerships and initiatives with community organizations, public schools, foundations, corporations, and religious groups. In the process, Lord explains how tensions among these organizations and local, state, and federal officials often exacerbated existing controversies about sexual behavior. She also discusses why the Public Health Service's promotional tactics sometimes inadvertently fueled public fears about the federal government's goals in promoting, or not promoting, sex education.

This thoroughly documented and compelling history of the U.S. Public Health Service's involvement in sex education provides new insights into one of the most contested subjects in America.



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