

Four Reasons AAP Is Wrong To Push IUD, Implants for Teen Girls

Posted by Eric Scheidler (September 30, 2014 at 3:02 pm)

Yesterday the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a new recommendation [<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/09/24/peds.2014-2299.full.pdf>] that physicians promote the progestin implant and the intrauterine device (IUD) for teen girls. As the father of six girls—including three teenagers—I find this new recommendation particularly disturbing.

It's not just that I bristle at the thought of a doctor asking my daughters a battery of questions about sex, as the AAP recommends. It's that I know how upset they would be to hear sexual acts they've never given a thought to presented as perfectly normal, or even expected of them.

Some might accuse me of being naïve, but they don't know my girls. And that points to the first of four reasons the new AAP recommendations are wrong-headed:

1. They undermine the role of parents.

In the new AAP recommendation, doctors are strongly discouraged from involving parents in their daughters' contraceptive use, even in states where the law doesn't require such "confidentiality." Though a nod is given to abstinence, moral questions about sex have no place in this private discussion between doctors and young girls, according to the AAP.

The message to teen girls is that—contrary to what their parents, church community and even their own well-formed consciences may have told them—there is no moral choice involved in whether or not to have sex.

Sadly, it should come as no surprise that this AAP recommendation would undermine the role of parents. One of the authors, Gina Sucato, is a member of the pro-abortion group Physicians for Reproductive Health, and [testified against \[PDF\]](#) a parental notification bill in Washington State. Such measures are [overwhelmingly supported](#) by the public.

2. They weaken teens' choice not to have sex.

Though you wouldn't know it looking at our entertainment and news media, teen sex has actually been on the decline for over two decades—13% since 1991. How much more might it have declined in the absence of the constant barrage of messages teens are exposed to, telling them that everybody's doing it and you're kind of weird if you're not?

Now add to that your own family doctor, with the door closed to your mom and dad, suggesting that you might want to have progestin implanted in your arm or an IUD inserted so you can have sex without worrying about pregnancy for years on end.

The message is clear: You can't be counted on to make good choices. First, you can't be counted on to take a pill every day (which is why the AAP is pushing implants and IUDs). Nor can you be counted on to decide not to have sex, despite all the reasons it's not a good idea.

Yet, somehow, you [can](#) be counted on to use a condom to prevent STDs. Sort of.

The AAP's attitude towards condoms is particularly puzzling. In defending the new preference for implants and IUDs, they point out how inadequate condoms are for preventing pregnancy—both because teens often don't want to use them, and even when used they have at least an 18% failure rate. But then, they insist that condoms are absolutely necessary, each and every time a girl has sex, lest she get an STD.

Back to the implants and IUDs, as one of my adult sons asked, what kind of impact will it have on a girl should it become known around school that she's using one of these long-term methods of birth control?

Finally, the headlines accompanying the new AAP recommendations are discouraging both to teens who are abstaining from sex and the parents, pastors and educators who want to encourage that choice. What, instead, might be the impact of headlines announcing the AAP's support for abstinence as the best choice for teens?

3. They set a double standard on adolescent health.

Even as parents and coaches are trying to discourage the boys on the football team from using steroids to improve athletic performance, the AAP is encouraging the girls on the cheerleading squad—or the volleyball team—to have steroid-releasing devices implanted in their

bodies.

That's what the artificial hormones in these devices are: steroids. Why the double standard? Shouldn't we be protecting [both](#) our sons and daughters from artificial steroids, and the [health risks associated](#) with them?

One of the long-term birth control methods being recommended by the AAP doesn't release hormones: the copper IUD. However, it may be more problematic for my final objection:

4. They ignore the abortifacient potential of the IUD.

It was because the IUD has the potential to cause an early abortion that Hobby Lobby objected to providing the devices without copy in their high-profile lawsuit against the HHS Mandate. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the owners of such closely-held corporations cannot be forced to violate their moral objection to abortion by being required by the government to include abortion-inducing drugs in their health plans.

But the AAP has no problem promoting the IUD to teen girls without disclosing its abortifacient potential, which is completely ignored in the new birth control recommendations to doctors—despite the fact that teen girls might choose differently if they knew the IUD could cause an early abortion.

We already know that one of the co-authors of the new recommendations is a radical abortion advocate. Not only did she speak out against parental notification, she [signed an amicus brief \[PDF\]](#) with the Supreme Court in opposition to the federal ban on partial birth abortion—again, a position at odds with the moral judgment of most Americans.

But however strongly Gina Sucato supports abortion, shouldn't she and her colleagues at the AAP seek to respect the pro-life views of their patients? Don't they have an ethical responsibility to disclose the fact that an IUD may prevent a newly-conceived human being at its embryonic stage of life from implanting in its mother's uterus?

In these new recommendations on birth control for teen girls, the AAP has adopted a cavalier attitude not only towards girls' best interests and parents' relationships with their daughters, but to the value of life itself.

I encourage parents to [contact the AAP](#) [<http://www2.aap.org/guestbook/contactus-form.cfm>] to respectfully voice your objections to the new recommendation and call on them to emphasize abstinence as the only good choice for our daughters.

- See more at:

<http://proliferation.org/hotline/2014/aapiud/#sthash.EA2vJfAH.dpuf>



Eric Scheidler with six daughters in 2007.