

**Testimony to the Committee on Health and Human Services
For the Performance Oversight Hearing on the Department of Health**

**Nadiyah Minor
Young Women's Project Peer Educator
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Hello Chairman Alexander and other Committee members, my name is Nadiyah Minor and I am a junior at Roosevelt High School. I am 17 years old; I love being involved in positive things. I played volleyball this year, I volunteer to my help with teachers and staff, and I am also a part of the Future Project Dream Team in my school. On the dream team my peers and I create a series of projects to help the people or community around us. My project is called Holidays of Happiness, so far I have completed two projects where I gave out food and clothes to help the homeless. I am also a peer educator with at the Young Women's Project (YWP), a DC nonprofit organization that builds the leadership and power of DC youth. I am here to testify about my work as a youth health educator. Thank you for hearing my testimony.

I decided to become a peer educator because I love helping people. I thought it would be a good way to give back to my community. In a few years I'm going to be a doctor, so when I first heard about this organization and witnessed what they did, I just knew I had to sign up and participate. As a peer educator, I discuss the importance of having safe sex, I talk to people about healthy relationships, reproductive health, pregnancy options and a whole lot more! I am there to support my peers in every way. I listen to their stories, talk a little bit about what I know or have experienced and then I give positive feedback and advice I have learned. So far, I have done four lunchroom presentations. They all go pretty well, lots of people participate in the games Octave and I create, they enjoy the candy as well. Then we get them interested in taking a condom, we provide everyone with the knowledge of where to store them, how to open them and how to use them correctly. In the hallways, I ask people, "Hey! Are you sexually active? Do you need any condoms?" The females act a little bit more nervous than the males, but they come around pretty quickly.

As for myself, I am very fortunate to be one of the ones who got accepted into this program. I learned a lot by being here. I learned about female and male anatomy, how HIV works, the steps to putting on a female condom and so much more. Many of my health classes never covered any of this material, they only taught us about the menstrual cycle. As a peer educator, I also learned that being social and having open conversations is not a bad

thing. This job has helped me gain a lot of good friends and I've met people that I've never even seen in the school.

I have three recommendations for what you can do to make the schools better.

1. **Keep supporting the youth health educator program:** While interacting with my peers as a youth health educator, I found that there are a lot of myths and misunderstandings out there. I see that some students are scared to reach out to ask adults for condoms because of judgment. There was one person who did not know how to put on a condom, so I walked them through it. They find it pretty embarrassing to ask teachers for advice and find it easier to talk to us. This is what makes peer educators so important.

Thank you for your time.