



Phone Sex

Dial “P” for prevention

July 1, 1998

The California State Health Department wants you to reach out and touch someone. In its new HIV prevention campaign, the agency is handing out 50,000 10-minute calling cards to local groups connected to those at high risk for HIV. Before cashing in on free long-distance, callers hear a prerecorded message: “You have the power to stop HIV and AIDS. Use a condom every time you have sex,” followed by California’s AIDS hotline number. “Prevention literature often ends up in the trash,” said Drew Johnson, of the California Office of AIDS. “But when you offer something of value, people are more likely to listen. The card provides a tool for self-reflection.”

Tell that to GMHC’s Richard Elovich. “There’s a value in disseminating safer-sex messages, but they are starting to become a little like the surgeon general’s warning on cigarette packs,” he said. “People don’t want to see them anymore. We have to expand our HIV prevention efforts beyond one-way instruction.”

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