

December 13, 2011

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We, the undersigned organizations, represent hundreds of thousands of health care professionals who care for women and teens every day. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) relied on scientific research and medical experts in arriving at the decision to lift the age restriction for Plan B over-the-counter availability. We are profoundly disappointed in the Department of Health and Human Services' decision to overrule the FDA's recommendation to make Plan B more accessible to women of all ages.

Plan B helps teen and adult women prevent unintended pregnancies. Voluminous research shows that Plan B is safe for teens and women and is in fact safer for young adults than many other medications sold on drugstore shelves. None of the many highly effective birth control methods now available are 100% effective. That's why women need Plan B, a back-up birth control option. Allowing everyone—teens and adults—to buy Plan B over-the-counter would result in fewer unintended pregnancies and reduce the need for abortions. Medical authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, agree that Plan B One-Step is safe for over-the-counter use by anyone at risk of an unintended pregnancy. The science shows conclusively that Plan B is safe for teens. Teens, like adults, can read and follow instructions for safe and proper use of this emergency contraceptive. And like adults, teens can understand that EC should only be used as a backup method for pregnancy prevention and that it does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

As organizations representing medical professionals, we all share the goal of lowering the rates of unintended pregnancy and reducing the number of abortions in the United States. Mr. President, we urge you to carefully review this decision, ensure that the Department of Health and Human Services acted in accordance with the highest level of scientific integrity, and take corrective action if you find, as we do, that this was not the case.

Sincerely,

American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Medical Women's Association
American Society for Emergency Contraception
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America