



## PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH



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### ***National Survey Shows Pharmacists Want to Provide Birth Control and Help Prevent Pregnancies for 22 million U.S. Women***

**Oakland/Los Angeles** – A national study published in the latest issue of the *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association* shows that the majority of U.S. pharmacists want to provide women direct access to birth control without an advance prescription from a doctor. Study authors say not only are pharmacists willing to provide direct access to birth control pills, the contraceptive patch and vaginal ring, the majority of American women say they would gladly seek these products directly from the pharmacy without having to get a prescription from a doctor or clinic.

Conducted by Pharmacy Access Partnership, a center of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health, and in collaboration with the American Pharmacists Association, the study counters claims that most pharmacists have a moral objection to providing contraceptives. In fact, the research reveals that not only are the majority of pharmacists (85%) interested in providing birth control directly to women, nearly all (98%) view this as an important health care issue.

Currently, the only hormonal contraceptive option available to women without a prescription is emergency contraception and it is restricted to women over 18 years of age. All other hormonal contraceptives require a medical prescription. Yet, only nine states have a pharmacy access model for emergency contraception where specially trained pharmacists can provide the product without a doctor's prescription.

According to the study's author, Sharon Landau, MPH, Director of Pharmacy Access Partnership, these harsh economic times require that we all think strategically about how to make family planning services and products more accessible and affordable to all women. "If more states implement pharmacy access programs to include other birth control options, the U.S. could serve between 17-22 million women nationwide and potentially prevent half a million unintended pregnancies each year," said Landau.

Landau highlights that England just embarked on a pilot pharmacy access program for hormonal birth control methods. And Washington State also implemented a pharmacy access demonstration program, which showed patient satisfaction with pharmacists' services and the convenience pharmacies offer. One in five U.S. states has a regulatory environment that currently allows for similar pharmacy access programs. Pharmacy Access Partnership and the Pacific Institute for Women's Health are exploring implementing a similar pilot in California.

To view the full study, titled "*Pharmacist interest in and attitudes towards direct pharmacy access to hormonal contraception in the United States*," visit [www.pharmacyaccess.org](http://www.pharmacyaccess.org) <<http://www.pharmacyaccess.org>>.