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**Statement by Sharon Landau, Director of Pharmacy Access Partnership, a center of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health, on Appeals Court Ruling that WA Pharmacists Must Provide All Medications, including Emergency Contraception**

(Los Angeles/ Oakland, CA) – Now that a federal appeals court has ruled that Washington State pharmacists are required to dispense Plan B emergency contraception despite personal objections, more efforts must be advanced to educate pharmacists and the public alike to the benefits of unfettered access to emergency contraception and other family planning methods.

On July 7, 2009, the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit in Washington State responded to a lawsuit filed by Family-owned Ralph's Thriftway and two other pharmacists objecting to dispense EC by unanimously ruling to lift an injunction that blocked Washington State officials from penalizing pharmacists who refused to dispense any medication, including Plan B emergency contraception (EC), based on personal beliefs or biases.

Indeed, the Court's ruling marks a victory for women's health overall. However, it is important to recognize that this lawsuit is the work of vocal minority and that the majority of pharmacists want to and do provide women with this vital second chance to prevent unintended pregnancy.

In fact, it has been Washington State, along with California, that have been role models for the county in providing pharmacy access to EC. Long before Plan B became available over the counter to consumers age 18 and over, pharmacists in these states were voluntarily getting specially trained to dispense the medication without an advance prescription from a doctor or clinic. In a published [survey](#) conducted in collaboration with the American Pharmacists Association, Pharmacy Access Partnership demonstrated that nationally the majority of pharmacists (85%) are not only interested in providing EC but also want to improve access to other hormonal contraceptive methods.

As Don Downing, R.Ph., Clinical Professor at the University of Washington School of Pharmacy and member of Pharmacy Access Partnership's Circle of Advisors, can attest, "Washington pharmacists have dramatically increased access to EC and will continue to serve as a safe, convenient and timely point of access for women in need of EC."

The Pacific Institute for Women's Health and its center, Pharmacy Access Partnership, will continue efforts to improve EC access in pharmacy settings, especially for [youth](#) who still require a prescription for EC. We are also training pharmacists nationally to become more effective [advocates and leaders](#) for reproductive healthcare access.

For more information on access to EC and other reproductive health services in pharmacies, please visit [www.pharmacyaccess.org](http://www.pharmacyaccess.org). For a background on the WA pharmacy access program, please visit [www.GO2EC.org](http://www.GO2EC.org).