



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 15, 2009

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**Pharmacy Access Partnership, a Center of the Pacific Institute for Women's Health,
Launches the First U.S.-based Program to Promote Youth Access in Pharmacies**

(Los Angeles/Oakland, CA) – Pharmacists, health care professionals and advocates, and youth and youth-serving organizations from across California are participating in the first, U.S.-based collaboration to increase youth access to sexual and reproductive health care services in pharmacies.

The Youth Friendly Pharmacy Initiative represents an urgent call-to-action to adequately address the sexual and reproductive health care needs of California's youth. Coordinators say there are critical needs to address, including reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that teen pregnancies are on the rise again after a steady 15-year decline. Moreover, California has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies in the country. The CDC also reports that one in four teenage girls in the U.S. has a sexually transmitted infection.

The Youth Friendly Pharmacy Initiative is designed to improve youth access to reproductive health care services in pharmacies by increasing teens' awareness and access to services. The program also aims to enhance pharmacies' capacity to attract, serve and retain youth clients.

According to Belle Taylor-McGhee, President and CEO of the Pacific Institute for Women's health, pharmacies and pharmacists represent an essential access point of care for California's teens, and with culturally relevant training provided through the Youth Friendly Pharmacy Initiative, they will be better equipped to respond to emerging teen health issues, including the FDA's recent decision to allow over-the-counter access to emergency contraception to 17 year olds.

“When adolescents and teens are given good information and easy access to services, they are empowered to make good decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. We are very excited about this initiative and have been extremely encouraged by the positive response from pharmacists, medical providers and youth-serving organizations,” said Taylor-McGhee.

Initial training opportunities for the Youth Friendly Pharmacy Initiative will take place throughout CA May through July. The next training will take place:

**Monday, May 18th at the Walgreens Store, located at Polk and Broadway,
San Francisco, 5:30 - 7 pm**

PIWH collaborators include the Marin County Department of Health Services, Walgreens Pharmacies, and the California Pharmacists Association. For more information regarding the Youth Friendly Pharmacy Initiative, visit www.piwh.org or contact Juana Rosa Cavero at jrcavero@piwh.org.

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