



# **Texas Campaign for Emergency Contraception**

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December 4, 2003

U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
ATTN: FDA Advisory Committee Meeting  
on Application to Switch Plan B from Rx to OTC  
Documents Management Branch HFA - 305  
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear FDA Advisory Committee on Plan B:

On behalf of the undersigned Texas organizations and our members, we are writing to express our deep concern regarding the availability of the emergency contraception and our strong support for switching the product from prescription-only to over-the-counter status.

Since the FDA's approval of Plan B, the first progestin-only emergency contraceptive pill (EC) for sale in the U.S., an estimated 2.4 million women have used this important prescription to prevent unintended pregnancy. Yet, many American women face prohibitive barriers in obtaining EC within its window of effectiveness.

Women are required to obtain a prescription in order to obtain emergency contraception, yet many women do not have a regular health care provider, or health insurance. In addition, sexual assault survivors---who should certainly have timely access to emergency contraception--- do not always seek health care following their assault. Doctors' offices and clinics are often closed at nights and on the weekends--when unprotected sex often occurs.

According to the National Victim Center and Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center access to EC is particularly important for rape victims since fear of pregnancy is one of the most common concerns cited following a rape. In a study published by the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology in 1996, 32,000 U.S. women per year become pregnant by rape. The American Medical association requires that rape victims be offered EC as part of their standards of emergency. Without adequate access to EC, women will continue to face unintended pregnancies and abortions that could have been avoided.

As you are aware, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has endorsed widespread, over-the-counter distribution of EC to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions in the U.S. by an estimated 50%. In fact,



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research published by the Alan Guttmacher Institute in 2002 showed that EC prevented an estimated 51,000 abortions in the year 2000 alone.

In regards to emergency contraception in Texas, 58% of Texans surveyed in the 2001 Scripps Howard Texas Poll support making emergency contraception widely available to Texas women.

In light of these concerns, we believe that the EC should be granted over-the-counter status. Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

*Gray Panthers of Texas*

*Greater Dallas Coalition for Reproductive Freedom*

*League of Women Voters of Texas*

*National Association of Social Workers, Texas Chapter*

*National Council of Jewish Women, Texas State Public Affairs*

*National Organization for Women, Texas Chapter*

*Texas Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League*

*Texas Affiliation of Planned Parenthood Associates*

*Texas Women's Political Caucus*

*Women's Health and Family Planning Association*

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