

For Immediate Release: July 10, 2007
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Client Confidentiality Card Promotes Privacy at the Pharmacy Counter

New Campaign Designed to Make it Easier for Women to Get Emergency Contraception



Oakland, CA – Privacy and confidentiality are what women say they want when they walk into a pharmacy to get Plan B emergency contraception (EC, also known as the “morning after” pill). Today, Oakland-based Pharmacy Access Partnership and Los Angeles-based Pacific Institute for Women’s Health (PIWH) responded to women’s wishes with a new campaign promoting the “client confidentiality card” or C-Card.

The wallet-sized card is small enough to be carried in a woman’s purse and can be taken to the pharmacy counter to request EC non-verbally. The card offers a tear-off message which asks the pharmacist to help the woman learn about EC in a private and confidential manner. The C-Card will be distributed first in California and then nationwide.

“Almost everyone has had the experience of requesting medication at a crowded pharmacy counter within earshot of other customers. The C-Card is designed to offer women—especially young women who may not feel comfortable requesting EC—to get the back-up birth control discreetly and in the most respectful way. Our goal is to eliminate some of the barriers women of all ages face in getting what they need to prevent an unintended pregnancy,” said Belle Taylor-McGhee, Executive Director of Pharmacy Access Partnership.

According to Magaly Marques, Executive Director of PIWH, the C-Card was informed in part by research in California with young African American, Latina and Asian Pacific Islander women. Many of the young women said they would be more likely to seek services in the pharmacy if it was possible to have a private conversation with the pharmacist. Marques says that the C-Card presents an excellent opportunity to educate consumers about EC access in pharmacies, and especially to reach underserved communities.

In California, pharmacists provide pharmacy access to EC more than any other clinical service, including diabetes management and immunizations. “Pharmacists who are trained to provide direct pharmacy access to EC—that is, they have completed a special training program and work under protocol to initiate EC prescriptions—appreciate their clients’ desire for privacy,” said Taylor-McGhee. State and national pharmacy associations, retail chains and community pharmacies have been notified about the C-Card in advance of community distribution.

The cards are free to women and cost \$10 for a pack of 100 for organizations wishing to distribute the cards. To learn more about the C-Card or to place an order, please visit www.pharmacyaccess.org.

Pharmacy Access Partnership, founded in 1999, is an independent center of the non-profit Public Health Institute. Pharmacy Access Partnership sponsored the nation’s first legislation to make emergency contraception available directly through a pharmacist, without requiring an advance prescription from a doctor or clinic. The mission of the Pacific Institute for Women’s Health is to increase the ability of women to make informed decisions about their sexuality and reproduction. PIWH advances reproductive choice and defends sexual and reproductive rights for women and girls around the world.