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OCTOBER IS NATIONAL PHARMACISTS' MONTH: PHARMACY-FOCUSED CARE IS GROWING TREND
Pharmacy Access Partnership Continues to Promote Training, Education in Anticipation of Plan B OTC

Statement by Belle Taylor-McGhee, Executive Director, Pharmacy Access Partnership

Oakland, CA – The month of **October is National Pharmacists' Month**, a time to recognize the important work of pharmacists nationwide. With the growing trend toward pharmacy-focused access to healthcare, **pharmacists are gaining an increasingly important role as members of the healthcare team.**

- ♦ The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) recent decision to make Plan B emergency contraception (EC) available without a prescription to consumers 18 and older is part of this growing trend. Once Plan B becomes available from behind pharmacy counters (anticipated by the end of 2006), **pharmacists will be key in providing this back-up birth control method to consumers who present proper identification.**
- ♦ In the nine states where EC pharmacy access is available (WA, CA, AK, HI, NM, ME, MA, NH, VT), specially trained pharmacists will still be able to initiate a Plan B prescription without requiring an advance prescription from a doctor or clinic. **Pharmacy access to EC serves as an essential model of EC provision, regardless of the woman's age.**
- ♦ Pharmacy Access Partnership supports live and online training opportunities and works directly with a variety of training providers in California. As a result, **pharmacists in CA provide EC pharmacy access more than any other clinical service, including diabetes management and immunizations.**
- ♦ Pharmacists are increasingly seeking training to gain clinical and counseling skills to help better meet women's healthcare needs. **More than 3,600 California pharmacists have received EC training and 86% of California counties have a pharmacist trained to provide EC. In Washington State, pharmacists are the largest EC provider in the state and see an average of 3,000 women each month.**

Pharmacy Access Partnership thanks pharmacists nationwide for all of their hard work and dedication, and remains committed to ensuring that pharmacists are prepared to meet the nation's healthcare needs. Be sure to visit <http://www.pharmacyaccess.org/PharmacyAccessPartners.htm> to learn more about how pharmacists are making contributions in your community.

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Pharmacy Access Partnership was established in 1999 as a center of the independent, nonprofit Public Health Institute. Its purpose is to expand consumer access to contraceptive commodities and reproductive health services in pharmacies, and to give pharmacies a stronger role in promoting community health.