



american society for
emergency contraception

American Society for Emergency Contraception: Written testimony for Maryland HB477

The American Society for Emergency Contraception (ASEC) strongly supports Maryland HB477. ASEC envisions a world in which everyone, everywhere has access to affordable emergency contraception. Emergency contraception (EC) provides a last chance to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex or sexual assault. EC works by preventing ovulation, so it is more likely to work the sooner it is taken. Barriers to access can increase pregnancy risk.

There are many obstacles to accessing EC in pharmacies. Not all pharmacies sell EC, and those that do often keep it behind the pharmacy counter, forcing an interaction with staff that may be unwelcome during a time of stress. 25% of stores impose outdated age restrictions that the FDA removed a decade ago. The cost, \$35-\$50, is out of reach for many. For college students, these barriers are often compounded by lack of transportation to get to a pharmacy and intimidation when forced to discuss their EC purchase with pharmacy staff. Price can be an even greater barrier for college students, who are often living with very limited budgets.

Emergency contraception should be accessible and affordable (under \$10) on every college campus. Many colleges and universities provide EC at student health centers, but hours are often limited to 9-5 during the week. Unprotected sex often occurs on nights and weekends, not during business hours, and students may be anxious to get EC as soon as possible. Delays in getting EC can mean the difference between becoming pregnant and preventing pregnancy. Providing EC in vending machines and other campus venues with 24/7 access promotes privacy and convenience for students and increases the chance that EC will be effective.

ASEC works closely with college students and staff around the country to improve campus access to EC through our Emergency Contraception for Every Campus project. We are keenly aware of the urgent need for EC on college campuses and the strategies that are most effective for ensuring access. Providing affordable EC through vending machines and other outlets with 24/7 access minimizes barriers and supports students in preventing pregnancy and pursuing their future goals.

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