



**HB367 - Community Colleges - Contraception - Access Requirements
Appropriations - February 13, 2024
SUPPORT**

Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this priority bill for the Young Democrats of Maryland. YDM represents the next generation of Marylanders and seeks to advance policies which will allow Maryland youth to thrive.

HB367 addresses a critical necessity: the accessible, on-campus availability of over-the-counter (OTC) contraceptives at Maryland community colleges. Community college students encounter unique challenges, particularly regarding access to affordable reproductive healthcare. This bill mandates that community colleges provide access to over-the-counter contraception, empowering students to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

While Maryland made notable strides last year by enacting similar legislation for public 4-year universities, it's imperative to recognize that community college students, who often face more nuanced financial circumstances, merit equal access to reproductive healthcare resources. Reproductive healthcare access goes beyond personal autonomy; it is a fundamental human right. By ensuring on-campus access to over-the-counter contraceptives for Maryland community college students, HB367 takes significant strides toward leveling the playing field for young adults, particularly those grappling with financial adversity.

Given the uncertain future of medicated abortion due to a pending Supreme Court ruling, access to contraceptives assumes heightened importance for Maryland community college students. HB367 plays a pivotal role in safeguarding their reproductive healthcare options, equipping them with the resources to navigate their bodies and futures confidently.

The tangible benefits of contraceptive access extend beyond immediate healthcare needs. Research, such as the 2021 study by the National Institutes of Health, underscores the positive correlation between contraceptive access and educational outcomes. This study revealed a significant 14% increase in graduation rates among students provided with access to contraceptives. HB367 not only addresses immediate healthcare needs but also bolsters long-term educational success and societal advancement.

In light of these considerations, the Young Democrats of Maryland wholeheartedly support this bill and strongly advocate for a favorable committee report.

Sincerely,

Melissa Bender
YDM Vice President for Political Affairs
Chair, YDM Legislative and Policy Committee