



TESTIMONY FOR HB1171
Nonprescription Drugs and Devices Provision by Registered Nurses
and Sale of Contraceptives Through Automatic Devices

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Williams

Committee: Health and Government Operations

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB1171 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

HB1171 builds on one aspect of a law passed last year requiring public 4-year colleges and universities to provide 24-hour access to over-the-counter contraception on campus through student health centers, retail outlets on campus, and/or vending machines. HB1171 would allow 1) the sale of contraceptives by means of a vending machine or other automatic device and 2) registered nurses to provide, without a prescription, nonprescription contraception drugs and devices in a local health department.

Wider distribution of contraception would address barriers such as limited health center pharmacy hours, transportation challenges, high pharmacy costs, outdated age restrictions, and refusal to sell contraception outright. It also means reduced unintended pregnancies; better family planning; better health outcomes; and enhanced economic opportunities from the timing of reproductive choices to pursue education, career goals, and economic stability.

Access to contraception promotes gender equality by allowing both men and women to participate equally in family planning decisions. Statistically, women of color have lesser access to healthcare resources. Providing reproductive healthcare resources to these women is a crucial step in addressing the multifaceted injustices in both poverty and healthcare.

HB1171 supports reproductive justice and equitable access to healthcare. We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.