

June 7, 2013

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We, the undersigned organizations, represent hundreds of thousands of health care and public health professionals and researchers who care for women and teens every day. We are profoundly disappointed by the recent decisions your Administration has made with regards to the *Tummino v. Hamburg* case that will further delay our patients from accessing emergency contraception. Extensive scientific research and medical expertise support lifting age restrictions on emergency contraception products to make them more accessible and reduce delays in taking this time-sensitive medication. We stand behind our support of science that recognizes the safety and efficacy of emergency contraception (EC) as an over-the-counter product free of age restrictions.

As voluminous research shows, EC safely helps teen and adult women prevent unintended pregnancies. In fact, EC is safer for young adults than many other medications currently sold on drugstore shelves. All women need EC as a back-up birth control option in cases of unprotected sex, sexual assault, or contraceptive failure. Allowing everyone—teens and adults—to buy EC over-the-counter would aid in reducing unintended pregnancies and the need for abortions.

The decision not to remove age restrictions not only prevents teens from accessing a safe medication, but also disproportionately impacts women of color and young women, who may lack the identification necessary to purchase the drug. Moreover, maintaining an age restriction has created situations in which pharmacists give out incorrect information to doctors and patients about the medication's availability and accompanying age restrictions.¹

Medical authorities agree that EC is safe for over-the-counter use by anyone at risk of an unintended pregnancy. Requiring a prescription for those under age 15 serves as an unnecessary barrier, especially when rapid access is critical for optimal effectiveness of the drug. Studies have shown that teens and adults can read and follow instructions for safe and proper use of this medication according to the product label.²

Science shows conclusively that EC is safe for and should be available to all who need it, regardless of age. As organizations representing medical professionals, we reaffirm our collective support for emergency contraception as a true over-the-counter product without any age or other point-of-sale restrictions.

¹ See, e.g. Wilkinson T et al. Pharmacy Communication to Adolescents and Their Physicians Regarding Access to Emergency Contraception. *Pediatrics*. 2012;129(4):624-629.

² Raine TR et. al. An over-the-counter simulation study of a single-tablet emergency contraceptive in young females. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*. 2012;119(4):772-779.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Pediatrics
American College of Nurse-Midwives
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Medical Association
American Medical Women's Association
American Nurses Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Emergency Contraception
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
International Association for Forensic Nurses
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Society of Family Planning

cc: Attorney General Eric Holder
Secretary Kathleen Sebelius
Commissioner Margaret Hamburg, MD