Emergency Contraception Over-the-Counter Access in Hawai`i

A. Ahedo, B.A.

K. Wheeling, M.P.H.

N. Partika, M.P.H

Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies

Coalition of Hawai`i

Agenda

- Introduction
- Survey Design and Procedure
- Results by island
- Conclusion

Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECP)

- Emergency contraception (EC) is a method of pregnancy prevention that may be used after a contraceptive accident, sexual assault, or unplanned or unprotected sexual intercourse

- Used to be called "Morning After Pill"

- Short-course, high dose regimens of:

  - Estrogen/progestin combinations (Ovral™) or

  - Progestin only pills (Plan B™)

  - Taken within 120 hours of unprotected intercourse to prevent pregnancy

Need for Emergency Contraception

- Unintended pregnancy from contraceptive failure is major healthcare issue in America
- More than 3 million unintended pregnancies each year
- 53% of unintended pregnancies occur in women using contraceptives
  - 15% of women using condoms become pregnant annually
- 700,000 abortions each year
- Increased access to emergency contraception could prevent up to 50% of unintended pregnancies
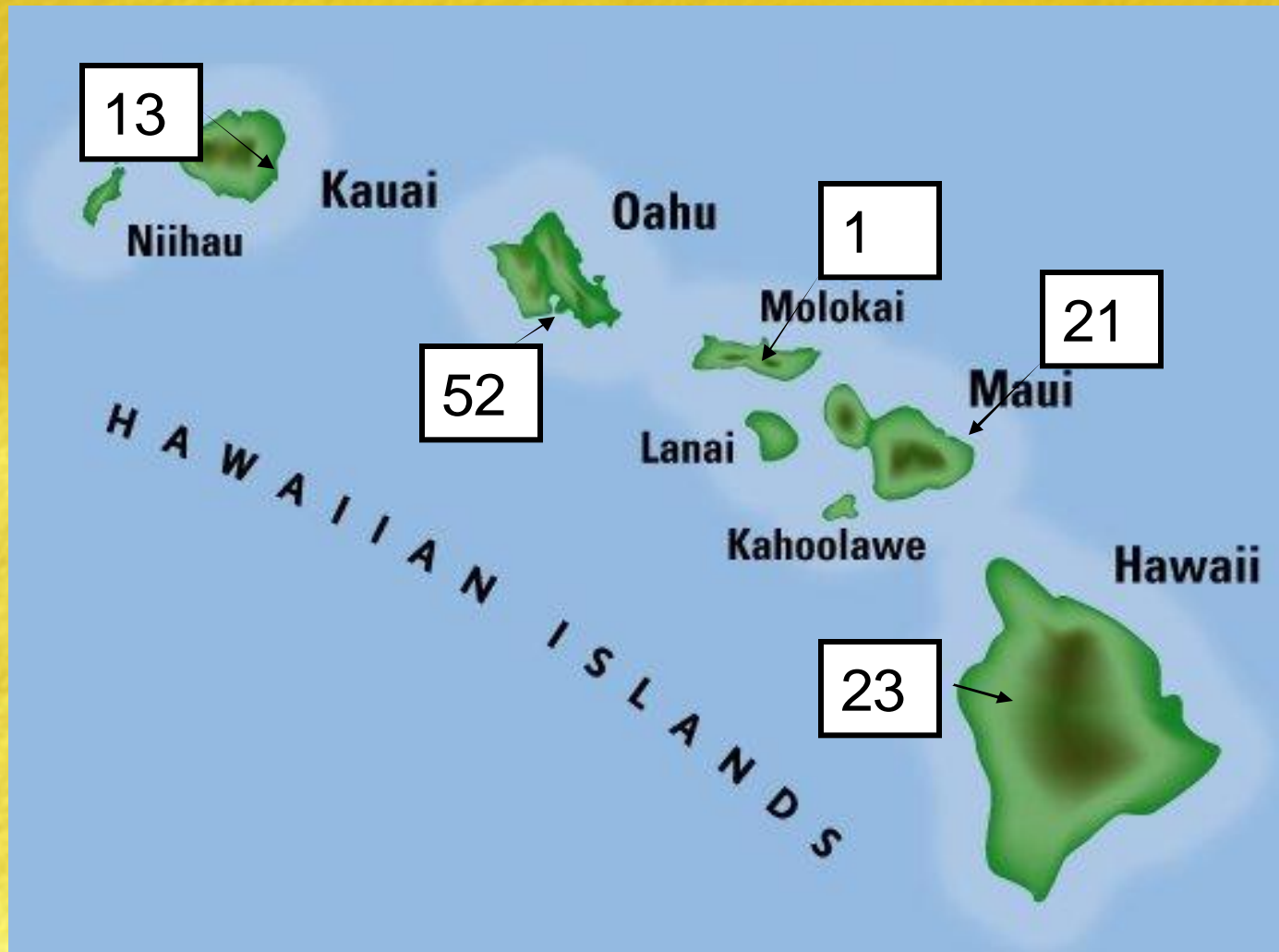
How to Access EC in HI

- By prescription from a physician

- EC Access program

- Over-the-counter (OTC) at a pharmacy

Study Purpose and Methods

- Purpose: to analyze the accessibility of EC OTC in Hawai`i pharmacies
- Methods:
  - January 2007 HMHB conducted a survey of 110 pharmacies state-wide
  - Pharmacies selected using HMHB and HMSA list online
  - 52 Pharmacies surveyed on Oahu, 23 on Big Island, 13 on Kauai, 21 on Maui, and one on Molokai

Islands of Hawai`i

Survey Design and Procedure

- Telephone survey
- Surveyor:
  1. Assumed the role of an 18 year old woman seeking EC OTC
  2. Spoke to whomever answered the telephone
  3. If asked, indicated that the last sexual act was within 72 hours of the phone call

Survey Questions

○ Surveyor asked:

1. Is EC available OTC at that location?

2. How much does it cost?

3. How old do you have to be to get it?

4. Do I need to bring my ID?

5. Can my boyfriend pick it up for me?
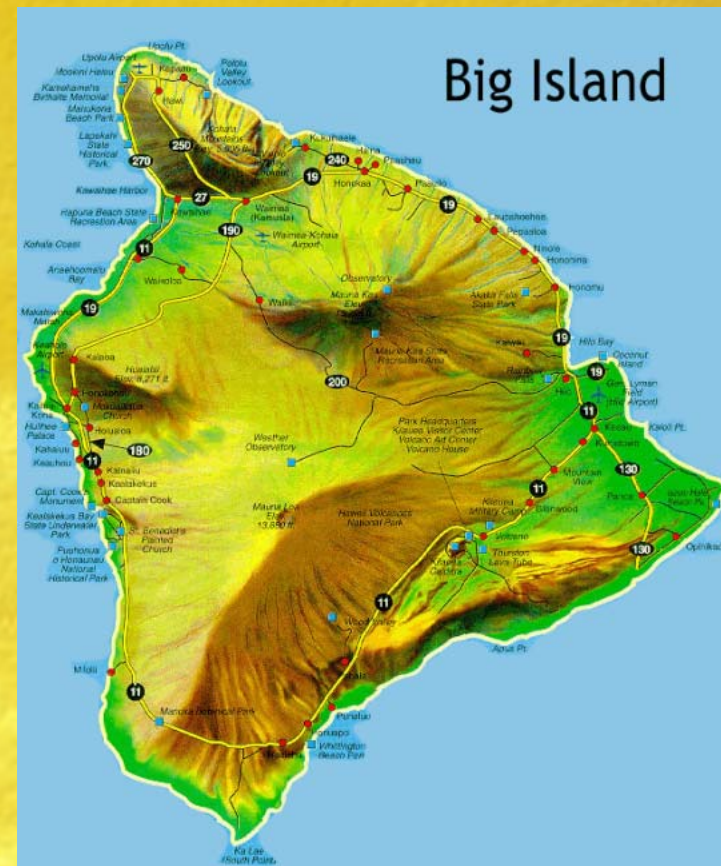
Survey Results
Oahu

- 52 pharmacies surveyed
- Average price: $40-45
- 48 (92%) had EC OTC
- Of those who had EC OTC:
  - 4 (16%) said they were out of stock for the weekend
  - 11 (23%) provided incorrect information on how to obtain EC
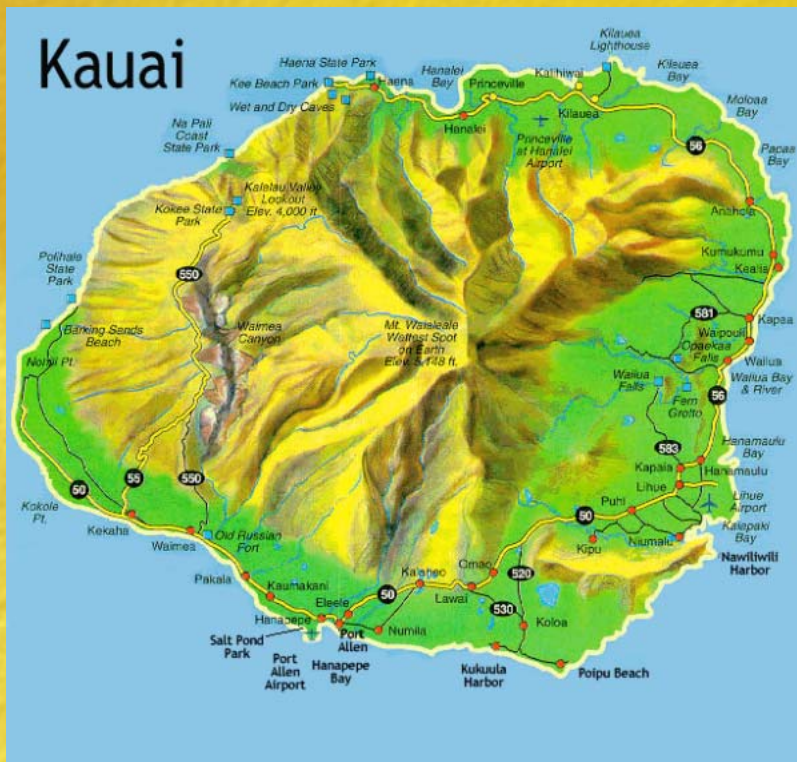
Survey Results
Big Island

- 23 pharmacies surveyed
- Average price: $40-45
- 17 (74%) had EC OTC
- Of those who did not have EC OTC:
  - 3 (50%) had not received EC OTC packages
- Of those who had EC OTC:
  - 7 (41%) provided incorrect information on how to obtain EC

Big Island

Survey Results
Kauai

- 13 pharmacies surveyed
- Average Price: $47-50
- 9 (69%) had EC OTC
- Of those who did not have EC OTC:
  - 2 (50%) had not received EC OTC packages
- Of those who had EC OTC:
  - 1 (8%) were out of stock for the weekend
  - 5 (55%) provided incorrect information on how to obtain EC

Survey Results
Maui

- 21 pharmacies surveyed
- Average price: $37-50
- 20 (95%) had EC OTC
- Of those that had EC OTC:
  - 9 (45%) provided incorrect information on how to obtain EC

Survey Results
Molokai

- 1 pharmacy surveyed
- Did not provide EC OTC or EC by prescription
- Women's Health Center at the Hospital provides EC

State-wide Findings
Possible Barriers

- Available in over 60% of pharmacies surveyed on every island (Except Molokai)
  - Not as available on neighbor islands
- Price range between $37-50
  - More expensive on neighbor islands
- 34 out of the 94 (36%) pharmacies surveyed state-wide providing EC OTC gave incorrect information
  - Neighbor island pharmacies provided more misinformation

Barrier to Access-- Misinformation

The Different Types of Incorrect Information Regarding EC OTC Access in HI and How Many Pharmacies Provided it (n=34, 36%)

Incorrect information provided	Mandatory Counseling	Must be present to pick up EC	Incorrect age	Do not need to bring identification	Mandatory forms to complete
Number of pharmacies	8	17	1	3	5

- EC works best if taken shortly after the time of unprotected sex
- Misinformation may inhibit women from receiving it in a quickly

Conclusion

- EC access is important
- Timely access is important in the ability for EC to function adequately
- The survey results indicated that there are currently significant barriers statewide in Hawaii to accessing EC OTC
- It is advisable to call ahead of time to check for availability
- Pharmacy staff should be better informed to provide better service and ensure accessibility

Questions?

Angelina Ahedo
Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
Coalition of Hawaii
Phone: 808-951-5805
Email: ahedo@hawaii.edu