



Building a Coalition for Emergency Contraception (EC) Advocacy: Lessons Learned from the California EC Network



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Who is the California EC Network?

The CA EC Network includes clinicians, pharmacists, state and local officials, public health departments, researchers, advocacy groups, and health educators. Our members include:

- Academy for Educational Development
- American Academy of Pediatrics, District IX
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, District IX
- Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice
- Black Women for Wellness
- California Black Women's Health Project
- California Commission on the Status of Women
- California Department of Health Services
- California Family Health Council, Inc.
- California Family PACT Program
- California Latinas for Reproductive Justice
- California National Organization for Women
- California Planned Parenthood Education Fund, Inc.
- California Primary Care Association
- California Coalition for Reproductive Freedom
- Center for Health Training
- City of Berkeley Public Health Clinic
- Compton Foundation
- Feminist Majority Foundation
- Institute for Reproductive Health Access
- Kaiser Permanente
- Law Offices of Elizabeth C. Saviano
- Los Angeles County Department of Health Services
- Los Angeles Indigenous Peoples' Alliance
- Mickey Fine Pharmacy
- NARAL Pro-Choice California
- National Health Law Program
- National Latina Health Organization
- Pacific Institute for Women's Health
- Pharmacy Access Partnership
- Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
- Planned Parenthood Golden Gate
- Planned Parenthood Los Angeles
- Planned Parenthood Mar Monte
- Planned Parenthood of San Diego/Riverside Counties
- Planned Parenthood Shasta Diablo
- Plaza West Pharmacy
- Public Health Institute
- SocialQuest, Inc.
- Susan Berke Fogel, Esq.
- UCLA Reproductive Health Interest Group
- UCLA School of Public Health
- UCSF Center for Reproductive Health Research and Policy
- UCSF Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
- USC School of Pharmacy
- Women's Foundation of California

and others....

Pharmacy Access Partnership and the California Family Health Council launched the CA EC Network in May 2006 to:

- Improve EC access and awareness to prevent unplanned pregnancy
- Bolster women's decision-making authority to use EC
- Mainstream EC access to use universal access as a bridge to ongoing healthcare
- Support women's reproductive right, privacy and ability to choose the best contraceptive option for them
- Impress upon policymakers, opinion leaders, and media professionals the importance of broad EC access

Implications of the August 2006 FDA Plan B over-the-counter (OTC) decision:

Although many viewed the FDA's approval of Plan B EC as an OTC product for consumers 18 and older as an advance for reproductive health access, barriers remain for young women, low-income women and those without proof of age, who must still obtain a prescription for Plan B (most state-funded health insurance programs still require a prescription for Plan B).

The EC Network bolstered CA and national advocacy efforts to respond to the EC OTC guidelines through:

Collaboration



- Focus on key issues: access for low-income women and youth
- Hold semi-annual meetings and strategic planning
- Facilitate joint projects

Media Cultivation



- Establish policy positions
- Hold press events
- Develop strategic messaging

Education & Outreach



- Centralize info on website
- Provide community and practitioner education
- Distribute information resources

Accomplishments

- Coalition-building across diverse fields of interest
- Strategizing for policy change (i.e. OTC decision)
- Generating EC news in local papers, television

Challenges

- Limited resources, including funding and time
- Difficult to avoid duplication of member efforts
- Shifted focus on EC since FDA OTC decision

Moving Forward...

- Seek dedicated funding
- Continue focus on networking vs. activities
- Conduct "State of EC in CA" research paper (if funded)

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Visit us at www.pharmacyaccess.org/caecnetwork.