



Family Planning Advocates of NYS
17 Elk Street
Albany, New York 12207-1002
Phone: (518) 436-8408
Fax: (518) 436-0004
Website: www.fpaofnys.org

MEMORANDUM OF SUPPORT
Unintended Pregnancy Prevention Act
A 627 (Paulin, et al)/S 1410 (Schneiderman et al)
2009

AN ACT to amend the education law, the insurance law and the public health law, in relation to providing for dispensing emergency contraception under certain conditions.

In the fall of 2006 the FDA approved Plan B emergency contraception (EC) for over the counter (OTC) use. In spite of overwhelming medical evidence that Plan B OTC was safe for all women, the FDA put politics ahead of science and restricted purchase of Plan B to people 18 and older who could provide proof of age. Although the FDA has now announced it will allow the manufacturer of Plan B OTC to sell the drug to women 17 and older, the age restriction continues to place undue burdens on women who do not have the necessary proof of age documentation at the time of purchase. Many women who are trying to prevent an unintended pregnancy still face unnecessary barriers to EC.

EC is a time sensitive drug that can be taken up to 72 hours after unprotected sex, but it is proven to be most effective if administered within the first 24 hours. Emergency contraception can not cause an abortion; it is just a higher dosage of birth control.

The intent of this legislation is to increase access to emergency contraception by:

- Allowing women direct and immediate access to emergency contraception from a pharmacist, registered nurse or licensed midwife, using a non-patient specific order written by a licensed medical provider.
- Mandating that all insurance policies that cover prescription contraception to cover emergency contraception when provided by a non-patient specific prescription or OTC.
- Directing the New York State Department of Health to include information on EC and its safety, efficacy, appropriate use and availability in its wellness education and outreach program.

Since this drug is time-sensitive this bill is necessary because it allows women to bypass the frequent difficulties encountered when trying to make medical appointments to get a prescription from a health care provider.

FPA strongly urges the passage of this legislation.