



On the leading edge of women's health

February 25, 2004

Commissioner Mark McClellan  
Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Dr. McClellan:

On behalf of the National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health (NPWH), I am writing again to support making Plan B® emergency contraception available over-the-counter, with no restrictions.

From what we understand about the reason for the delay in approving Plan B as an OTC product is that this issue has become politicized. We strongly believe that government policies should be based on science and not on political ideology.

We know there has been some concern expressed about the availability of OTC Plan B leading to an increase in sexual activity among young people. However, there is no evidence that supports this cause and effect concern any more than seat belts and airbags cause drivers to drive recklessly. But like airbags and seatbelts, emergency contraception should be there when it is most needed—immediately after the accident.

Do we want women, particularly adolescents, to seek our care if they are sexually active? Of course we do. However, we do not support the notion that they should compromise their chance of preventing an unintended pregnancy by placing barriers to obtain emergency contraception. Moreover, if as studies have shown, we can avoid those unintended pregnancies by the use of emergency contraception, then our first encounters with patients can be spent on health promotion and not dealing with the crisis of an unintended pregnancy which unfortunately is often the case.

As health care professionals who want the best care provided to women, we fully support making Plan B available over-the-counter. Over-the-counter availability puts this safe and effective drug where women can access it the soonest—in their local drug store where there is no wait for an appointment or for an office to open on Monday morning.

We urge you to support the approval of Plan B for over-the-counter status without delay.

Sincerely,

Susan Wysocki, RNC, NP, FAANP  
President and CEO

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National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health