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April 1, 2004

Dr. Mark McClellan, Commissioner
FDA
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

RE: Over-the-counter status for emergency contraception

Dear Commissioner:

I am writing in regards to the public comment period for over-the-counter status for emergency contraception. As a practicing obstetrician/gynecologist and as the father of three young females I am very hesitant to support over-the-counter status for emergency contraception. This will allow many women, especially teens, to bypass physician visits depriving them of needed STD testing, Pap smears and counseling in regards to sexual issues. This is bad medical policy, especially for teenagers who are more susceptible to STD's and who are at increased risk for suffering future infertility secondary to undiagnosed STD's. I am also afraid there will be an immense increase in peer pressure, especially among teenagers, to become sexually active since there is an over-the-counter medicine to prevent pregnancy. My hunch is that this will significantly increase the early sexual activity rate among teenagers, which would not be in their best interest. It also raises the possibility that many young men will know where to purchase this and assert increasing pressure on their female counterparts to become sexually active. These medications also have significant side effects including nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain and are contraindicated with certain medical conditions. I am afraid that nobody will be there to counsel these young men and women when they purchase them that they should not take this medication if they have any family history of antiphospholipid antibody syndrome, prior DVT's or if they are already pregnant.

Again, I urge you to reject the application for making this an over-the-counter drug.

With best professional regards,

Kevin W. Hamburger, M.D., FACOG

KWH:LHP dnr

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