



DIOCESAN PRO-LIFE COMMISSION

Catholic Diocese of Rapid City 918 5th Str. Rapid City, SD 57701 605/348-~~6~~
PO Box 678, Rapid City, SD 57709-0678

February 2, 2004

Mark B. McClellan, M.D., Ph.D.
Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane, Parklawn Bldg., Room 14-71
Rockville, MD 20857

RE: "Plan B" Morning-after pill

Dear Commissioner McClellan,

We ask you to seriously consider the risks of allowing the "over-the-counter" sale of "Plan B" morning-after pills and to not approve this proposal.

"Over-the-counter" availability will encourage routine use, especially by teenagers and young women who are not reliable users of birth control or condoms. Such use is not advised by the manufacturer and can expose these women to risks without medical supervision. If schools cannot give students an aspirin or medications without parental consent, why should neighborhood stores sell them the powerful "Plan B" without a doctor's order or parental consent? This is both bad policy and bad medicine.

Just recently, our newspaper ran an article entitled "FDA: OTC misuse deadly". Although this article was about OTC painkillers, especially acetaminophen, it points out the dangers of people ignoring directions and misusing drugs because they assume that if they are OTC they are safe. The article also mentions that certain people are at increased risk of other side effects...just as young women could be with "Plan B". There is a greater risk of ectopic pregnancy, which could be masked by the nausea and abdominal pain common with the morning-after pill, putting these women in danger.

This drug is being marketed as a "contraceptive", but it works both before and after conception. Women deserve to know it can also cause early abortions. There is a big difference between preventing new life and destroying life that has begun. Making it OTC puts more pressure on pharmacists who oppose dispensing "abortifacient" pills. Even if sold "behind the counter", women would not receive the counseling they need from a doctor who knows them and provides ongoing care. Women of all ages deserve better than this experiment.

We will keep you in prayer, hoping that OTC sale of "Plan B" or any other morning-after pills is not allowed. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Sue Jimmerson, Chairman
Commission members

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