

Dedicated to the Health
of the Whole Community



February 17, 2004

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Mark B. McClellan, MD, PhD
Commissioner of Food and Drugs
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fisher Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

Dr. Dr. McClellan:

I am writing as an attending staff physician at a busy county hospital, a member of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and a member of the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals (AHRP) to support over-the-counter (OTC) status for Plan B emergency contraceptive pills (ECP's). I have reviewed the scientific literature and believe the evidence clearly supports this change. I agree with the FDA advisory panel's finding that the data shows ECP's to be safe and effective for reducing unintended pregnancy and that it is appropriate for over-the-counter use. I urge you to support OTC access to ECP'S.

Half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned and half of these end in abortion. ECP's, which prevent fertilization, are an important resource for women when they are at risk for unintended pregnancy.

The sooner emergency contraceptive pills are taken after unprotected intercourse, the more effective they can be. Evidence shows that some women still find it difficult or impossible to get emergency contraception from a provider or health care professional in time. Like most of my colleagues, I am not available to provide it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The evidence is clear: ECP's should be available over the counter for the women who can benefit. All women deserve the opportunity to safely and effectively protect themselves from unintended pregnancy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Hugin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michèle Hugin, MD
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Santa Clara Family Medical Center,
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