

Resolution on Advance Prescription for EC

WHEREAS the AAFP policies on health issues, reproductive decisions states, “The American Academy of Family Physicians believes physicians should seek to, through extensive patient education and counseling, decrease the number of unwanted pregnancies,” and

WHEREAS the use of safe, effective emergency postcoital contraceptive methods could result in 1 million fewer abortions and 2 million fewer unintended pregnancies each year in the United States,¹ and

WHEREAS emergency contraception is effective within a 120 hour window, and is more effective the earlier it is taken,⁵⁻⁷ and

WHEREAS the AAFP Congress of Delegates in 2003 passed resolution No. 515 to “support the current proposal submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to make the progesterone-only emergency contraception available over the counter,” giving support to increased access to emergency contraception, and

WHEREAS emergency contraception has not yet become available over-the-counter in most states or on a national level, and

WHEREAS across the country, attention has been drawn to cases where pharmacists refused to dispense birth control, including emergency contraception,²⁻⁴ and such refusals lead to delays in filling prescriptions, and

WHEREAS the AAFP Congress of Delegates in 2005 passed substitute resolution No. 501 stating, “That the AAFP oppose measures that interfere with prompt dispensing of all medications, including emergency contraception, which must be taken promptly to optimize efficacy.”, and

WHEREAS colleague organizations included the American Academy of Pediatrics and American College of OB-Gyns have made policy statements supporting advance prescription of emergency contraception.^{8,9} ACOG has also recently launched a public information campaign dedicated to encouraging women to ask their health care providers for advance prescriptions to be on hand in case emergency contraception is needed,⁹ and

WHEREAS studies also show that women are more likely to use EC, without increasing risk-taking behavior, if they have it readily available,¹⁰ now therefore be it

RESOLVED that the AAFP create a policy statement on Emergency Contraception, affirming its value as a preventative against unintended pregnancy, and encouraging family physicians to talk to patients about emergency contraception at routine visits and dispense prescriptions in advance for to women of reproductive age, now therefore be it

RESOLVED that the National Congress of Residents will instruct their delegate to bring this resolution to the AAFP National Congress of Delegates for consideration.

¹Trussell J, Stewart F. The effectiveness of postcoital hormonal contraception. *Fam Plann Perspect* 1992;24:262-4.

²Austin L. "Pharmacist's refusal stirs debate; Rules vary on moral choice not to provide morning-after pill." *The Houston Chronicle* 29 Feb 2004, p34,

³ "Pharmacist's refusal to issue 'morning-after pill' prompts suit." *Buffalo News* 13 Aug 1999, pA11.

⁴Simms P. "Testimony urges support for rights of pharmacists, patients senate bill would protect pharmacists, but it doesn't address transferring birth control prescriptions following a refusal." *Wisconsin State Journal* 18 May 2005, pA1.

⁵Ellerston C, Evans M, Ferden S, Leadbetter C, Spears A, Johnstone K, Trussel J. Extending the time limit for starting the Yuzpe regimen of emergency contraception to 120 hours. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2003;101(6):1168-1171.

⁶Von Hertzen H, et al. Low dose mifepristone and two regimens of levonorgestrel for emergency contraception: a WHO multicentre randomized trial. *Lancet.* 2002;360:1803-10.

⁷Randomised controlled trial of levonorgestrel versus the Yuzpe regimen of combined oral contraceptives for emergency contraception. Task Force on Postovulatory Methods of Fertility Regulation. *Lancet.* 1998 Aug 8;352(9126):428-33.

⁸ACOG Steps Up Efforts to Get Emergency Contraception to Women [press release]. Available at: http://www.acog.org/from_home/publications/press_releases/nr05-08-06-1.cfm. Accessed July 14, 2006.

⁹American Academy of Pediatrics. Policy Statement. *Pediatrics* 2005;116:1038-1047.

¹⁰Weismiller, DG. Emergency Contraception. *Am Fam Physician* 2004;70:707-14,717-8.