



The Massachusetts Emergency Contraception Network December 2004 Newsletter

About this Newsletter:

This newsletter is prepared and distributed by members of the Massachusetts Emergency Contraception Network. To contribute a news item or remove your name from the newsletter circulation list, please write to: Stacie@prochoicemass.org. We reserve the right to check and edit items as appropriate.

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In Massachusetts

1. Highlights from the Massachusetts EC Network meeting on Dec. 6

The meeting was a great success with each of the panelists sharing perspectives from their own disciplines on what is currently working to provide access to EC and what work remains. Some highlights are included below. However, for more details or info on how to get involved please read the meeting minutes which are included in a separate email.

- Rep. Peter Koutoujian, a lead sponsor for the EC Bill, “An Act to Provide Timely Access to EC,” and House Chair of the Health Care Committee, stated that even with a new pro-choice Speaker of the House, advocates still need to work with their legislators and educate them about EC.
- Elizabeth Cohen, MPH, Executive Director of Rape Crisis Services of Greater Lowell, said that the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE) provides EC, but not all hospital emergency rooms have SANE nurses or distribute EC.
- Barbara Herbert, MD, an Emergency Department doctor at Lawrence General Hospital, talked about how access to EC is currently dependent on which physician you see.
- Jenny VanAmburgh, PharmD, Assistant Clinical Specialist at Northeastern University School of Pharmacy, talked about the need to correct misinformation through Continuing Education programs.
- Finally, Stacie Garnett, EC Network Coordinator, gave an update on current accomplishments of the EC Network and ways to get involved.

For more information or a more complete summary of the meeting, please email Stacie@prochoicemass.org

2. New EC Outreach Coordinator in Western Mass.

Pam Bockol was hired in November by Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts to work with the EC Network and to increase access to EC in Western Mass. She has already begun work to form a Western Mass. EC Coalition and is interested in talking with anyone who has contacts or would like to participate. She also recently gave a presentation on EC at the Massachusetts Community Health Workers meeting in Central Mass. We are very excited to have Pam working with us. Welcome!

For more information, contact Pam at:
Pam_Bockol@pplm.org or call 413-732-1620 x1220

3. EC Bill re-filed in Massachusetts

The EC Bill, “An Act to Provide Timely Access to Emergency Contraception,” was re-filed in the Massachusetts legislature on December 1 with more than 62 co-sponsors in the House. The bill would require hospital emergency rooms to offer EC to rape survivors and allow pharmacists to dispense EC through a collaborative agreement with a physician. Last year, the bill passed in the Senate, but was never brought to a vote in the House. We are optimistic that we will get a vote on the bill in both the House and Senate this session. However, we have much work to do to generate support for the bill and we urge you to contact your state legislators about the bill.

For more information, click on the link below:

<http://www.prochoicemass.org/s05politicalupdates/legupdates.shtml#SUPPORTED> or contact Melissa Kogut at NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts at Melissa@prochoicemass.org

4. EC Network developing new materials and website

The EC Network is currently updating its public and provider education materials and we'd like to hear from you about what would be most useful. We plan to provide posters, low-literacy client brochures, and small wallet cards in both English and Spanish for public education. We also have resources for providers and sample protocols for EC. Some materials are already available on the web, and we plan to develop a website specifically for the EC Network in the near future.

To look at materials currently available, please click on the link below:

<http://www.prochoicemass.org/s06currentprograms/200311033.shtml>

To give feedback on resources that would be helpful for you, please contact:

Stacie@prochoicemass.org

5. Pharmacy students at Northeastern University lead presentation on EC for peers

Two Northeastern School of Pharmacy students, Rebekah Sherman and Emily Rowe, current and former interns at MDPH Family Planning Program, presented, "Emergency Contraception: The Role of the Pharmacy Intern," for other pharmacy students at Northeastern University. Over 70 people attended the presentation. The goal was not only for pharmacy students to learn about EC themselves, but for them to help spread the information at pharmacies where they work or intern.

6. Massachusetts budget cuts disproportionately affect women's and girls' access to reproductive health services

Funding for reproductive health services in the state has been cut significantly since fiscal year 2001, according to a report prepared by the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center. Although some funding has been restored in recent years, the overall budget still reflects a 25% reduction since FY 2001 when rates are adjusted for inflation. Family planning services include contraceptive counseling, screening for sexually transmitted infections, and provision of EC.

For more information, please click on the link below:

[Mass. Budget Cuts Disproportionately Affect Women's, Girls' Access to Reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS Services](#)

7. Pharmacist denies birth control for UMass student

A University of Massachusetts – Amherst student went to a CVS on University Drive where a pharmacist refused to fill her prescription for birth control. She waited 15 minutes while another pharmacist filled the prescription. Incidents of pharmacists refusing to fill prescriptions for birth control pills and EC are happening across the country. Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts reports many calls on the issue.

For more information, please click on the link below:

http://www.dailycollegian.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2004/12/13/41bd0f7e159b3?in_arc_hive=1

Around the U.S.

1. Article on pharmacists' right to object in the *New England Journal of Medicine*

An article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* examines the arguments for and against a pharmacist's right to refuse to fill prescriptions for EC. The article stresses the pharmacist's obligation to help the patient, especially with a time sensitive prescription like EC. However, the article falls short of advocating for a law requiring pharmacists to provide EC.

For more information, please click on the link below:

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/short/351/19/2008> or contact stacie@prochoicemass.org for the full text

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The Massachusetts Emergency Contraception Network provides a forum for those interested in improving access to and knowledge of emergency contraception- including medical providers, community organizations, and government agencies- to share ideas, coordinate resources, and maximize the impact of our work on the shared public health goal of reducing unintended pregnancies.

For more information concerning the Massachusetts Emergency Contraception Network please contact 617 556 8800 x13, or stacie@prochoicemass.org.