



The Massachusetts Emergency Contraception Network October/November 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. Update from the Massachusetts EC Network

- **Report on the EC Jamboree**

The Mass. EC Network was well represented at the 10th annual EC Jamboree meeting in New York City on October 1. The meeting, hosted by the American Society for Emergency Contraception, brought together advocates, researchers, pharmaceutical

manufacturers, government officials and others from around the country and around the world to discuss the latest findings and activities in EC. Topics included ongoing clinical and behavioral research, an update on the application to the FDA, state based strategies to increase access, teen access issues, messaging, and international updates.

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

- **Continuing Education for Pharmacists**

The EC Network is working with Northeastern University School of Pharmacy to offer another continuing education session for pharmacists on EC. It will take place on November 10 in Pittsfield, MA and will be presented by Jenny VanAmburgh, PharmD., Assistant Clinical Specialist at Northeastern University. Pharmacists are on the front lines of EC access and need to know how to counsel patients.

For more information, or to register, contact Anita Young at Northeastern University at a.young@neu.edu

- **Save the Date!**

The next EC Network meeting will be held on Monday, December 6 from 2:00-4:00 at the Boston Foundation on 75 Arlington Street. This will be an exciting opportunity to learn about the latest developments regarding EC and the activities of the EC Network. More details will follow. We hope to see you there!

Around the U.S.

1. Survey examines women's attitudes toward pharmacy access for EC and other hormonal contraceptives

The Pharmacy Access Partnership released a survey showing that two thirds of women would use pharmacy access to hormonal contraception including EC, provided that pharmacists would screen women for the methods. Interest is even higher among women who face significant barriers to getting a prescription for contraception, including uninsured and low-income women. As for EC, 55% of women surveyed said they would be more likely to use EC if it was available without a prescription and 40% said they would buy EC to have at home.

For more information, please click on the link below:
<http://www.pharmacyaccess.org/Publications.htm>

2. New sexual assault treatment guidelines have no mention of EC

The U.S. Department of Justice released a report in September to help jurisdictions develop appropriate responses for treating sexual assault survivors called "A National

Protocol for Sexual Assault Medical Forensic Examinations: Adults/Adolescents". The 141 page document does not even mention emergency contraception as a treatment option, however. Instead, the document says that providers should "discuss treatment options with patients, including reproductive health services," for women who are concerned about pregnancy resulting from sexual assault.

For more information, please click on the links below:

<http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2049/context/outrage>

<http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/ovw/206554.pdf>

3. New Hampshire: Pharmacist refuses to fill EC prescription

On a Saturday night in September in Laconia, New Hampshire, a Brooks pharmacist refused to fill a prescription for EC for a 21 year old woman. She said that after being lectured, she pulled over in the parking lot and cried. Another pharmacist offered to fill the prescription 3 days later, but by then it was too late for EC to be effective. Also troubling was the coverage of the story in the *Boston Herald* which referred to EC as "the "morning after" abortion pill." Although the story later mentioned that EC works by preventing pregnancy, the paper continues to spread misinformation by equating EC with abortion.

For more information, please click on the link below:

http://www.theunionleader.com/Articles_show.html?article=44651&archive=1

4. Hawaii: Administrative rules for pharmacy access approved after long delay

On September 29, the Hawaii Board of Pharmacy/ Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs approved administrative rules for direct pharmacy access for EC. The rules now need to be signed by the Attorney General and the Governor before implementation can begin. In May, members of the Hawaii Women's Legislative Caucus criticized the delay in EC pharmacy access, which had been signed into law in 2003. Over 100 pharmacists have already been trained and are ready to provide EC directly to women.

For more information, please click on the link below:

<http://www.go2ec.org/ProfileHawaii.htm>

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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.