



Women's Health Advocates Call on Obama Administration and Congress to Protect Scientific Integrity, Uphold FDA Decision on Plan B One-Step

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Washington, DC – In an unprecedented move, Secretary of US Health and Human Services (HHS) Kathleen Sebelius today [overruled](#) the Food and Drug Administration's top scientists and leadership in rejecting an application to remove the age restriction on Plan B One-Step®, a safe and effective emergency contraception product.

This decision has provoked shock and indignation from women's health advocates, who have long supported removing the age restriction and making Plan B accessible to every woman who might need it. Kirsten Moore, President and CEO of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project, stated: "We are outraged the HHS is playing politics with women's health, overruling even the scientific conclusions of the FDA commissioner." Moore pointed to a [March 2009 Executive Order](#) by President Obama which pledged the Administration's commitment to scientific integrity, noting, "This decision flies in the face of that commitment. The FDA has done its job, assessed the data, and determined that the age restriction should go—but once again politics has trumped good sense and good science."

"As doctors and researchers have repeatedly stated, ample research shows Plan B to be safe for women of all ages and appropriate for over-the-counter access. It is deeply disappointing that this Administration would repeat the mistakes of the previous one," says Susan Wood, PhD, an associate professor at George Washington University's School of Public Health and former assistant commissioner for women's health at the FDA. In 2005, Dr. Wood resigned from the FDA on principle over the continued delay on approval for Plan B.

Moore added, "This decision will hurt women, plain and simple, and not just teens. Keeping Plan B behind the counter makes it harder for any woman of any age to obtain a safe and effective product she may need to prevent an unintended pregnancy and that is unacceptable. We call on Congress to conduct an investigation into the rationale behind this unprecedented decision. Furthermore, we demand that the White House, in keeping with its avowed commitment to scientific integrity and transparency, likewise investigate this matter and hold Secretary Sebelius accountable to the responsibilities of her office."

Plan B One-Step is a single dose levonorgestrel emergency contraceptive product that women can take up to 72 hours after unprotected sex. Emergency contraception is sometimes confused with the abortion pill. Plan B One-Step works to prevent pregnancy; it will not work if a woman is already pregnant.

For more information on emergency contraception: <http://www.rhtp.org/contraception/emergency/MediaPresskitPBOS.asp>.

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