



OVER-THE-COUNTER STATUS SOUGHT FOR BACK-UP BIRTH CONTROL METHOD

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**For immediate release
April 21, 2003**

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WASHINGTON, DC – Today, Women’s Capitol Corporation announced that it has asked the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to allow Plan B[®] – a progestin-only emergency contraceptive – to be sold over the counter. The application to make this product available without a prescription marks an important step in the growing effort to improve awareness of and access to back-up birth control.

Widespread use of emergency contraception could prevent as many as half of the 3 million unintended pregnancies that occur each year in the U.S. But to make a real difference, women need to know about it – and be able to get the medication quickly.

Our surveys show that sixty percent of American voters *do not even know* that there are products that have been proven effective in preventing pregnancy if used within days of unprotected sex. Yet, FDA-approved emergency contraceptives have been available by prescription in the U.S. for five years, and doctors have known for decades that higher doses of daily birth control pills can prevent pregnancy after sex.

The over-the-counter application filed by Women’s Capitol Corporation includes extensive research that documents the safety and efficacy of progestin-only emergency contraceptives and supports making them available without a prescription. We are hopeful that the FDA review process will help educate more women about emergency contraception and, ultimately, improve women’s timely access to back-up birth control.

The Reproductive Health Technologies Project coordinates *Back Up Your Birth Control*, an on-going public education effort launched in 2002 by medical organizations and public health advocates to raise awareness of emergency contraception in the U.S. The campaign, which features an annual Day of Action on March 20th, works to inform women that there is a safe, effective way to prevent pregnancy after sex – and that women can get a prescription or dose of emergency contraception today, to keep on hand just in case. More information about emergency contraception is available at www.backupyourbirthcontrol.org.