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CDC Report Shows Critical Role of Emergency Contraception *Advocates Press HHS to Remove Unnecessary Restrictions*

(WASHINGTON, DC) --- A new Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report confirms the key role emergency contraception plays in providing a safe, back-up birth control method.

“This report validates the importance of emergency contraception to millions of women and couples. It’s a safe and simple method, and there is no need for the current restrictions that can create confusion and delays for someone seeking emergency contraception at a moment when timing matters,” said Susannah Baruch, Interim President and CEO of Reproductive Health Technologies Project. One year ago, December 7, 2011, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius overruled the Food Drug Administration (FDA) and continued restricting Plan B One Step® emergency contraception to its behind the pharmacy counter status for women 17 and older.

“In light of this report, we hope that the Department of Health and Human Services will revisit the evidence and reverse its decision to restrict access to emergency contraception,” Baruch added. “This is a medication the FDA said should be accessible to all ages. It should be on the pharmacy shelf between condoms and pregnancy test kits, available to women and couples without hassle or delay. All of us need tools like emergency contraception to avoid unplanned pregnancy and to stay healthy.”

In the year since HHS overruled the conclusions of FDA experts, barriers such as age, valid identification, and less than universal availability have continued to undermine timely access by those who need this product to prevent unintended pregnancy. A recent Boston University study of 943 pharmacies in five major cities revealed that, when callers posed as 17 year olds seeking EC, one in five were incorrectly told they could not purchase EC under any circumstances.¹ Scientific research and expert opinions support removal of any age restriction and moving this safe and effective medication from behind the pharmacy counter to store shelves.

The CDC report is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db112.htm>

¹ Wilkinson T et al. Pharmacy Communication to Adolescents and Their Physicians Regarding Access to Emergency Contraception. *Pediatrics*. 2012;129(4):624-629.