



Access to Emergency Contraception at Missouri's Colleges and Universities

NARAL Pro-Choice Missouri Foundation conducted a survey of 32 Missouri colleges and universities in an effort to determine the availability of emergency contraception to students through their student health clinics. While our 2006 survey found that there had been only a modest increase in EC availability since 1999, the results of this year's study show a drastic, regrettable decline in the number of student health clinics that dispense EC. Because college students often rely heavily on health clinics as a central source of affordably priced contraceptives, this decline signals a significant decrease in the ability of college women to prevent pregnancy through the use of EC.

Using the same "mystery shopper" survey technique utilized in other sections of The Access Project Survey Report, NARAL staff was able to contact 26 of the 32 institutions with comprehensive student health services. **Of those clinics that responded, only 11, or 42%, made EC available to their student patients, down from 54% in 2006.** Of those that did not have the medication available, 87% did refer the caller to another possible source. While these referrals were by and large helpful, some health clinic personnel merely directed our caller to "look in a phone book," or to "make an appointment with a counselor."

While the reasons for student health centers not providing contraceptive services often have a great deal to do with a school's sectarian affiliation, **we were startled to discover that the decrease in EC availability is accounted for entirely by public universities that formerly provided the medication that no longer do.** The cause of these changes in dispensing practices is likely largely accounted for by a recent change in federal law that went into effect at the beginning of 2007. Previously, drug companies were encouraged by the federal government to provide inexpensive prescription drugs, including contraceptives, to college clinics. A drastic reduction in incentives to pharmaceutical companies, however, has ended their practice of selling contraceptives to clinics at discounted prices. This has resulted in clinics at many schools either raising prices for birth control, or ceasing to stock certain brands altogether¹.

Key findings are as follows:

¹See: Davey, Monica. "Big Rise in Cost of Birth Control on College Campuses." New York Times, 22 November 2007.



NARAL
Pro-Choice Missouri Foundation

- The percentage of student health clinics providing EC decreased from 54% to 42% from 2006 to 2007
- Both the University of Missouri–Columbia and the University of Missouri–St. Louis have discontinued providing EC to students since last year
- 87% of non-providing institutions did provide referrals, up from 50% in 2006