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## **APhA Statement on FDA's Recent Approval of Plan B for OTC Status**

**WASHINGTON, DC** - The American Pharmacists Association (APhA) applauds the Food and Drug Administration's plan to use pharmacists to expand access to medications. The FDA has approved Plan B (levonorgestrel), widely recognized as emergency contraception, availability as an over-the-counter medication for women 18-and-older. Plan B will retain its prescription status for women 17-and-under. While the Association does not take product-specific positions regarding the transition of products from prescription to over-the-counter status, APhA supports the transition of suitable prescription drug products to nonprescription status when supported by studies assessing the safety, efficacy, and appropriateness of such drug products for OTC use. This novel approach expands consumer access to both the medication and pharmacist services—if women age 18-and-over have questions about using emergency contraception, they are already at the pharmacy counter and the pharmacist is more accessible to answer those questions.

Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to help manage access to emergency contraception under this unique approach. In nine states, pharmacists have explicit authority to work with doctors to both prescribe and dispense emergency contraception, so that a patient does not need to visit their physician. When this novel over-the-counter and prescription approach is implemented later this year, women under the age of 18 may go directly to trained pharmacists in those states and, when medically appropriate, receive Plan B directly from the pharmacist. As we know from current pharmacist involvement in such agreements, not every patient interaction results in providing the medication. Through patient/pharmacist discussions, pharmacists were able to determine those who did not need emergency contraception such as patients who mistakenly believed that they used their contraception incorrectly (e.g., took her oral contraceptives an hour later than usual).

During the implementation phase of Plan B's change to OTC status, it will be important for employers to work with pharmacists to develop systems that support a pharmacist's ability to opt out of working with emergency contraception, while providing a timely alternative for consumers.

As the largest and first established organization representing all pharmacists across a variety of practice settings, APhA will work with the FDA, its more than 57,000 members, as well as other healthcare providers to ensure that all patients' needs are met with the highest quality of care without violating the personal beliefs of pharmacists.

The American Pharmacists Association, founded in 1852 as the American Pharmaceutical Association, represents more than 57,000 practicing pharmacists, pharmaceutical scientists, student pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and others interested in advancing the profession. APhA, dedicated to helping all pharmacists

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**American Pharmacists Association**  
Improving medication use. Advancing patient care.

improve medication use and advance patient care, is the first-established and largest association of pharmacists in the United States.

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