



Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette

To: House Committee on Health Care
From: Paula Bednarek, Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette Co-Medical Director
Date: April 14, 2015
Re: Testimony in Support of HB 3343

Dear Chair Greenlick and the members of the House Healthcare Committee:

As a doctor and the Co-Medical Director at Planned Parenthood Columbia Willamette, I support HB 3343 which would require up to 12 months of birth control to be dispensed and covered by all insurance. Each year, approximately 60,000 women, men and teens visit one of PPCW's health centers. Currently, we are able to provide our OHP and Oregon Contraceptive Care patients with 12 months of birth control at one time, but not our patients who have private insurance. The unnecessary limitations on dispensing are a barrier to contraceptive access and use and this legislature has a chance to improve contraceptive use by passing HB 3343.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, birth control is finally being covered just like any other preventive service because it is fundamental to improving women's health and the health of their families. At some point in their lives, 99% of sexually active women will use some form of birth control. Across all demographics and ethnicities — including Catholics, millennials and baby boomers — support for birth control is strong.

But birth control isn't just essential medicine for reproductive health care: Of those who use the pill, nearly 60% use it for medical reasons other than contraception. Increased access to birth control is directly linked to declines in maternal and infant mortality; use of the pill can reduce the likelihood of ovarian cancer by as much as 50%; and it's effective in protecting women against debilitating symptoms of endometriosis and in treating conditions like pre-menstrual pain and migraines.

In 2013, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued recommendations for contraceptive use that included reducing unnecessary barriers from providers such as limited dispensing. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists issued an opinion encouraging their members to follow the CDC's guidelines, including the recommendation to dispense for 12 months.

The CDC recommendations read: "The more pill packs given up to 13 cycles, the higher the continuation rates. Restricting the number of pill packs distributed or prescribed can result in unwanted discontinuation of the method and increased risk for pregnancy. In addition to continuation, a greater number of pills packs provided was associated with fewer pregnancy tests, fewer pregnancies and lower cost per client."

Inconsistent use of contraception accounts for 41% of unintended pregnancies. We see in our health centers that dispensing birth control for 12 months at one time increases continuation rates and prevents unintended pregnancy. I support HB 3343 because I want to be able to provide all my patients with proven best practices for their family planning needs.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. It is better and more cost effective to cover birth control than to have unwanted pregnancies. When a woman has the ability to plan if and when to have children, it's beneficial to both her and to the state of Oregon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paula Bednarek". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent than the last.

Paula Bednarek, MD
PPCW Co-Medical Director