



Oregon State Pharmacy Coalition Supports HB 2879

The Oregon State Pharmacy Coalition supports HB 2879 because allowing pharmacists to provide hormonal birth control expands access to important, cost-saving medications.

The pharmacist is one of the most accessible health care professionals in the national delivery system, and that is a hallmark of the profession. Their expertise and education means it is common sense to involve them in assuring patient access to cost-saving, self-diagnostic therapies, while still providing a ready resource for clients. The Coalition is fully supportive of this legislation and even encourages expansion to include all forms of self-administered birth control. In this, we are not alone.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists supports improved access to contraceptives for women and has advocated for over-the-counter status for oral contraceptives as one strategy to prevent unintended pregnancy. Their studies indicate that women who are at risk for unintended pregnancy would readily access all forms of self-administered birth control from pharmacies - including oral, patch or vaginal ring. Several studies have demonstrated that women can self-screen for contraindications to hormonal therapy. In some cases, women are more likely to identify contraindications than their health care provider.

The Direct Access study, conducted in select community pharmacies in Washington state, was a pilot project in which pharmacists provided hormonal contraceptives to women through a collaborative drug therapy protocol. A self administered screening tool and physical assessment of weight and blood pressure were elements of the protocol. Follow up with the patients enrolled in the study was performed by pharmacists at 1, 6 and 12 month intervals. The objectives of the study were to assess:

- The impact of pharmacist-prescribed contraceptive care on contraception initiation and continuation rates;
- the effectiveness of self screening by women as a tool for selection of appropriate candidates eligible for hormonal therapy;
- the feasibility of pharmacist screening, provision and management of contraceptive therapy; and
- the acceptability to users of hormonal contraceptive initiation and management by pharmacists

195 women (91% of those screened) were prescribed hormonal contraceptives by pharmacists. After 12 months, 70% of women participating in the study reported continuing use of hormonal contraceptives. **Nearly all the participants expressed willingness to continue seeing their pharmacist prescriber for continued support of contraceptive therapy.**¹

¹ *J Am Pharm Assoc.* 2008; 48: 212-221