

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Planned Parenthood to Press for Minors' Access to Emergency Contraception on 'Back Up Your Birth Control Day'

In addition to providing hundreds of clients with reduced-cost emergency contraception (EC) during the 8th annual Back Up Your Birth Control Day on Wednesday, March 25th, Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Inc. (PPHS) will enlist patients and supporters at its 13 health centers to urge President Obama to let stand yesterday's federal court order expanding access to EC for minors. (PPHS health centers in Blacksburg VA and Parkersburg WV will participate on March 26th.)

On Monday, a federal district court issued a strongly worded ruling that will expand minors' access to EC and that criticizes the Bush Administration for its political, non-scientific handling of the requests that EC be available to all women without a prescription. Specifically, the court ruled that the FDA cannot prevent EC being sold over the counter to 17 year olds, effective within 30 days. The court further ruled that the FDA must reconsider whether minors under the age of 17 should be permitted to obtain EC over the counter.

"Denying girls under age 18 access to emergency contraception without a prescription is bad public policy that increases teenage pregnancy and minor abortion rates," said David Nova, PPHS Vice President. "Yesterday's court ruling will hopefully enable minors to have the same access as adult women to purchase EC over the counter."

Plan B emergency contraception provides a larger dose of the same hormones found in birth control pills. When taken within five days (120 hours) of birth control failure or unprotected sex, EC can reduce the risk of unintended pregnancy. Plan B was approved for over-the-counter use in August 2006 for women ages 18 and older. Women under age 18 must obtain a prescription from a health care provider. Both versions of EC are available at PPHS health centers and will be offered at a reduced cost this Back Up Your Birth Control Day.

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Planned Parenthood Health Systems, Inc. is a private, nonprofit family planning agency that respects and protects the rights of each man and woman to make informed reproductive decisions. Our mission is to provide accessible, high-quality health care and information to clients and to serve as advocate and educator to the community on responsible human sexuality. We have offices in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.