

Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health: Applauds legislative effort to increase access to birth control

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Madison, Wisconsin – The Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) thanks state Representative Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) and Senator LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee) for authoring legislation that would guarantee women access to a 12-month supply of contraception at one time. If enacted, this legislation would greatly improve effective access to birth control for women in Wisconsin and reduce the rate of unintended pregnancies, which in turn will reduce overall medical costs.

Currently, most women's health insurance plans only cover dispensing a 30 or 90 day supply of birth control, even though their prescriptions are effective for 12 months. Research indicates that dispensing a 12-month supply of birth control significantly increases the consistency with which women will effectively use contraception, thus reducing the number of unintended pregnancies by as much as 30 percent.

"This legislation is a great commonsense approach to help ensure that women across Wisconsin have access to the best standards of care when it comes to pregnancy prevention," said Sara Finger, Executive Director of WAWH. "Rep. Shankland's and Sen. Johnson's proposal would be of particular benefit to women who face obstacles to accessing care because of busy schedules or where they live, such as women who work multiple jobs or women who live in rural areas."

The Center for Disease Control currently recommends dispensing 12-month supplies of birth control as best practices because it is a safe and effective way to reduce unintended pregnancies. In 2015, Oregon became the first of seven states to pass such legislation. Oregon's bill passed with a unanimous vote in the state Senate and by a margin of 55-2 in the House of Representatives.

"Hopefully Wisconsin can follow Oregon's lead on this issue and join this positive national trend," added Finger. "This is exactly the type of sensible solution that improves women's lives and reduces medical costs in our state that members of both parties should support."

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The vision of the Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) is an environment in which all Wisconsin women, at every stage and every stage of their life, can realize their optimal health, safety and economic security.

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