



JOEL KITCHENS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 1ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

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Contact: Rep. Joel Kitchens
(608) 266-5350

Assembly passes Rep. Kitchens' birth control bill

MADISON, Wis. – Rep. Joel Kitchens (R-Sturgeon Bay) is extremely grateful that the Wisconsin State Assembly has passed his bill that would, under specific conditions, allow pharmacists to prescribe certain forms of birth control.

Under current state law, hormonal contraceptive patches and self-administered oral hormonal contraceptives – including common birth control pills – are only available through a prescription from a physician or an advanced practice nurse who has met the required qualifications. AB 304 adds pharmacists to the list of healthcare providers who are allowed to prescribe contraceptive patches and pills in Wisconsin.

“I am very pleased that the Assembly agrees with the overwhelming majority of the medical community that today’s birth control pills are so safe the government shouldn’t be putting up artificial barriers to prevent women from being able to conveniently obtain these contraceptives,” Rep. Kitchens said.

“While any medication has the potential to cause undesirable side effects in some individuals, more than 100 organizations – including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Medical Association, American Academy of Family Physicians and American Nurses Association – believe birth control pills are so benign they should be available over-the-counter and without a prescription,” Rep Kitchens added. “I put my trust in the medical experts who have vast experience and knowledge in this area.”

According to the latest available statistics, nearly half of all pregnancies in Wisconsin and the nation are unplanned, with state and federal taxpayers spending \$21 billion annually on related medical care. Close to 45 percent of unplanned pregnancies are aborted and almost 65 percent of unintended births in Wisconsin are publicly-funded, costing state taxpayers about \$314 million annually. The state of Oregon, which passed a similar bill in 2015, saw a decrease of 50 unplanned pregnancies and saved an estimated \$1.6 million in associated taxpayer costs in the first two years the law went into effect.

Under AB 304, women who are seeking to obtain birth control from a pharmacy must participate in a self-assessment questionnaire and undergo a blood pressure screening administered by a pharmacist. If there are any red flags, the pharmacist can then refer the patient to their physician for a prescription. The bill only applies to those who are 18 years of age and older.

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