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The Policy Implications of Providing Equal Access to Emergency Contraception

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Objective: The primary objective was to increase access to Emergency Contraception (EC) for adolescents who are 17 and under by reviewing, analyzing and supporting current legislation on EC. The Food and Drug administration packaging policies would then be analyzed in attempt to compose articles of legislation around the given guidelines. In addition, the research assistant would work with the Family Planning Advocates (FPA) and various health care organizations to develop fact sheets for pharmacists, consumers and victims of sexual and domestic violence in regards to EC.

Public Health Significance: This project focused on the Health Policy & Management aspects of Public Health because it addressed some of the political and managerial factors that influence access to health care and health services. Some of the consequences of decreased access to EC are the continual increase in unintended pregnancies, legal and illegal abortions, increase in children with birth defects due to improper prenatal care and children put up for adoption.

Data: The data used for this internship were literature on emergency contraception, current senate and assembly legislation and information from official government and reproductive health websites.

Methods:

1. Conduct an extensive literature review
2. Attend EC-OTC Work Group meetings
3. Attend Family Practice Advocates breakfast- "Lets Talk About Sex" in an attempt to obtain up to date information on EC
4. Develop Pharmacist, Consumer, Sexual and Domestic violence fact sheets
5. Review and analyze FDA EC packaging information
6. Review current legislature concerning EC
7. Conduct Interviews of FPA Emergency Contraception Staff
8. Possible Legislative Awareness Day Lobbying

Results:

1. The Pharmacist Fact Sheet was completed and distributed to every Pharmacist in New York State
2. The Consumer Fact Sheet was completed and is available for consumer access
3. The Sexual and Domestic Violence Fact Sheet was completed and is pending review
4. The articles of legislation were analyzed and given a memorandum of support
5. A template of possible legislation was created

Conclusion: In conclusion it is recommended that further analysis of current legislation be done. In addition, there should be more scientific and behavioral evaluation done on the potential side effects of Plan B ® as well as the increased sexual activity, over reliance on drug and the trend rates of abortion in New York State.