

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Rush Holt (NJ-12) and U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore (WI-04) today led a group of 44 Members of Congress in expressing disappointment in the anti-scientific decision by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius to limit the availability of Plan B emergency contraception.

Last week, Secretary Sebelius overruled career scientists at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, who had recommended that emergency contraceptives be sold over-the-counter. As the Members wrote, **“Science has confirmed that the drug is safe and effective with appropriate use and health experts have demonstrated that an age restriction is unnecessary. Your decision marks the first time a Health and Human Services Secretary has overruled FDA scientists. This is a profoundly troubling outcome from an Administration that stated science should be the foundation for such decisions. As you look ahead to future decisions affecting the health of millions of women, including those relating to birth control access, we urge you to put science first.”**

The full text of the letter follows below.

Secretary Kathleen Sebelius  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

We write to express our disappointment over your decision not to make the emergency contraceptive Plan B available over the counter for all girls of reproductive age.

Emergency contraception is a safe and effective medication that prevents pregnancy if taken soon after sexual intercourse. As you know, emergency contraception does not cause an abortion, but prevents pregnancy. Emergency contraception has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since 1999. In 2006, the FDA approved emergency contraception for over the counter sales for individuals ages 18 and older, and it has been available over the counter for women age 17 and older since 2009.

Providing emergency contraception over the counter for all girls of reproductive age would be consistent with the policies of many countries around the world, including the United Kingdom. Denying over the counter access will harm the effort to prevent unintended pregnancies.

Science has confirmed that the drug is safe and effective with appropriate use and health experts have demonstrated that an age restriction is unnecessary. Your decision marks the first time a Health and Human Services Secretary has overruled FDA scientists. This is a profoundly troubling outcome from an Administration that stated science should be the foundation for such decisions. As you look ahead to future decisions affecting the health of millions of women, including those relating to birth control access, we urge you to put science first.

Sincerely,

Rep. Rush Holt

Rep. Gwen Moore

Rep. Charlie Rangel

Rep. Barbara Lee

Rep. Sam Farr

Rep. Diana DeGette

Rep. Chellie Pingree

Rep. George Miller

Rep. Bob Filner

Rep. Pete Stark

Rep. Mike Quigley

Rep. Laura Richardson

Rep. Alcee Hastings

Rep. Linda Sanchez

Rep. Jerrold Nadler

Rep. Carolyn Maloney

Rep. Steve Cohen

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Rep. Joseph Crowley

Rep. Gerry Connolly

Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr.

Rep. James McGovern

Rep. Peter DeFazio

Rep. Adam Smith

Rep. Gary Ackerman

Rep. Lynn Woolsey

Rep. John Olver

Rep. Lloyd Doggett

Rep. Zoe Lofgren

Rep. Chris Murphy

Rep. Mike Honda

Rep. Kathy Castor

Rep. Nita Lowey

Rep. Niki Tsongas

Rep. Ted Deutch

Rep. Edolphus Towns

Rep. Steven Rothman

Rep. Janice Hahn

Rep. Doris Matsui

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard

Rep. Rosa DeLauro

Rep. William Keating

Rep. Jay Inslee

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