



Increase Access to Contraception via Pharmacist Prescribing During COVID-19

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As a result of COVID-19, shifts in traditional contraception access points have led to additional challenges, leading many people to seek contraception care from other avenues, such as pharmacies and online services. Pharmacies are an important access point for contraception with expanded hours and generally do not require appointments. Nearly all Americans (86%) live within **5-miles of a community pharmacy** and visit frequently for a variety of reasons. **Black women** may live closer to a pharmacy than White women.

One strategy to increase access to contraception is direct access in community pharmacies. This is achieved at the state level by expanding pharmacist scope of practice to include prescribing contraception, also known as pharmacy access to contraception. Direct pharmacy access to contraception can significantly increase the safety and privacy of people seeking contraception care. **Policymakers should eliminate barriers to pharmacist contraception services and increase access to this essential service during this public health emergency.**

Beginning in 2016, specific contraception prescribing authorities have been granted by legislation in 12 states (CA, OR, CO, HI, MD, UT, NM, TN, NH, WV, VA, MN plus Washington D.C.) and pharmacies in 4 other states have utilized collaborative practice agreement opportunities to provide **pharmacy access** to contraception. In these states, pharmacists can prescribe contraception after completing a training program. When visiting a **pharmacy for contraception**, the patient meets with a pharmacist for screening, assessment, and counseling before receiving a prescription and same-day supplies.⁴ A multi-state evaluation of **pharmacist prescription** of contraception found provision of a greater supply of medication compared to traditional clinicians, potentially improving contraceptive continuation.⁵

There are over 3000 **participating pharmacies** in 12 states (CA, OR, CO, HI, MD, UT, NM, WA, ID, MI, MT, TN) offering pharmacy access to contraception, though less widespread than desired. While the statewide policies facilitate implementation of this service, numerous **barriers** mitigate the potential reach and effectiveness, particularly the lack of payment for pharmacist contraception services. Pharmacists are motivated to provide this service in order to increase patient access and provide patient care services. Delivery of pharmacist contraception care is an important and underutilized avenue for people to initiate or continue contraception use during this public health emergency.

Read more in Sally Rafie, [It's Time for the Biden Administration to Let Pharmacists Dispense the Abortion Pill](#), Ms. Magazine.