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Gov. Whitmer Signs MPA-Backed Bills Allowing Pharmacists to Prescribe Contraception

LANSING – On Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed 16 bills that will expand reproductive freedom in Michigan, including a bill that allows pharmacists to directly prescribe and dispense contraceptives to patients. In a press release, Whitmer said the package of bills ensures women can more easily access critical health care by lowering costs and cutting unnecessary red tape, giving more Michiganders the opportunity to control if, when and how they choose to start their families.

"Today, I'm signing common sense bills to further protect everyone's fundamental freedom to make their own decisions about their own body," Whitmer said. "These bills will save women time and money so they can access the birth control they need and cut unnecessary red tape that stands between people and their health care. Whether you're getting ready to start a family or figuring out which contraceptive option is best for you, I'll fight to make sure you have the freedom to make that choice. Together, let's keep fighting like hell to protect reproductive rights."

House Bills [5435](#) and [5436](#), sponsored by state Reps. Stephanie A. Young, D-Detroit, and Kara Hope, D-Holt, expand contraceptive access in Michigan, giving thousands of residents access to basic health care. The bills allow a pharmacist to directly prescribe birth control and require insurers to cover the contraceptives. Both bills were MPA-backed legislative priorities.

Michigan is experiencing a shortage of obstetricians and gynecologists (OB/GYNs), with one-third of the state's 83 counties having no OB/GYNs at all. This shortage has negatively affected thousands of Michiganders, making it harder for them to access hormonal birth control.

"Michigan has many medical deserts, with an even greater number of communities without an OBGYN primary care provider," said MPA member and Wayne State University professor of pharmacy practice Mary Beth O'Connell, who was a leading voice in pushing for the bills' passage. "Michigan's unintended pregnancy rate was 50% in 2020. This legislation will help decrease these reproductive health deserts for essential contraception medications and help Michiganders prevent unintended pregnancies. We know that 67% to 82% of college students in Michigan from all races, ethnicities, religions and political affiliations – including both Republicans and Democrats – stated they would be interested in getting their birth control from a pharmacy. Ninety percent of college students and 74% of women felt this service would definitely or probably decrease their likelihood of having an unintended pregnancy. They felt the pharmacy service would be more convenient, save time and be easier for them."

Whitmer said the bills increase access to safe, affordable birth control and recognize pharmacists as important members of a woman's health care team. Michigan Pharmacists Association staff and members worked with state legislators to pass the legislation.

"Today, we are breaking down barriers to reproductive health care access in Michigan. This new law makes it easier for individuals — especially those in underserved communities — to take charge of their health and their futures," Young said. "Access to contraceptives shouldn't depend on where you live or whether you can get a doctor's appointment. By expanding access, we are prioritizing equity, convenience and the well-being of our residents. I'm grateful to my colleagues and advocates for helping us deliver meaningful change for Michiganders."

"Contraception should be easily and safely accessible," Hope added. "Now that these bills have been signed into law, barriers like geography and health care shortages are no longer obstacles to receiving contraceptive health care in Michigan. These new laws will make a meaningful change in the lives of Michiganders."

"Pharmacist-provided hormonal contraception is a necessary factor in increasing accessibility, particularly in areas with limited access to health care services," said Eric Roath, MPA's director of government affairs. "It enhances women's health by further empowering them to take control over reproductive decisions using safe and effective medications. This is critical toward improving health outcomes and reducing unnecessary health care spending."

About Michigan Pharmacists Association

The Michigan Pharmacists Association strives to serve members by providing support, advocacy and resources that ultimately improve patient care, safety, health and the practice of pharmacy. For more information, visit MichiganPharmacists.org.