What’s Your “Plan C” When You Can’t Get Plan B?
A Study by NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund

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Credit to Mike Mozart, “Plan B,” original may be found at https://flic.kr/p/qhsAUi

http://www.prochoicemd.org/assets/bin/pdfs/NPCMF%20EC%20Report.pdf
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Executive Summary
Emergency contraception (EC), also known as the “morning after pill,” is a large dose of oral contraception that helps prevent pregnancy after unprotected intercourse or birth control failure. In 2010, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund (NPCMF) published research about Maryland pharmacists’ knowledge and dispensing practices to determine challenges consumers were facing in accessing the products. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has since approved multiple forms of EC for unrestricted sale over-the-counter, without a prescription or with age or gender-related restrictions. Now with the passage of the Maryland Contraceptive Equity Act, effective January 1, 2018, customers will be able to access over the counter EC with insurance or Medicaid coverage without copay. During 2016 and 2017, NPCMF conducted another study on the availability of unrestricted EC in Maryland to determine areas in need of attention regarding implementation.

Different types of stores—pharmacies, grocery stores, big box stores—were surveyed in each county in Maryland and Baltimore City. A minimum of 30% of identified stores that potentially could carry EC products were surveyed in each county. A “mystery shopper” method, in which a caller or visitor to the store acted as a potential customer to purchase EC, was used in efforts to obtain true-to-life data on the availability and accessibility of the products. Highlights of the findings include:

- More than one-third of stores implemented unnecessary age restrictions (35.7%).
- Almost half of the stores kept the products behind the counter of the pharmacist or cashier where they are more difficult to find (46.6%).
- Almost all stores that volunteers rated as “Somewhat Difficult” or “Very Difficult” experiences kept their EC products behind the counter of the pharmacist, cashier, or customer service clerk (90.5%).
- The high costs of the products figure into anti-theft practices that undermine over-the-counter status of EC, including the use of locking devices over the packaging by stores (found in 36.7% of stores visited).

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund has pinpointed three types of barriers that limit Maryland consumers’ ability to purchase EC products: age restrictions, improper placement in stores, and high costs. Often, these issues work in tandem and become insurmountable for many individuals, particularly those unaware of their rights or federal guidelines to access EC. There were also some indications of stores imposing gender restrictions of those seeking to purchase EC. Recommendations for improving access to EC in Maryland include ending the practices of age and gender restrictions, ensuring that product location is truly accessible over-the-counter (on-the-shelf), and identifying ways that consumers can access the products at lower cost.

Introduction

Emergency contraception (EC), sometimes referred to as the “morning after pill” or “Plan B,” is a high dose of progestin (a hormone commonly used for birth control) that helps prevent pregnancy when taken after unprotected intercourse or contraceptive failure. There are different brand name and generic types of EC, including Plan B One-Step, My Way, Next Choice One Dose, Take Action, and Aftera. This type of EC is most effective if it is taken within 72 hours of intercourse, but is 50% more effective within the first 12 hours. EC works by preventing or delaying ovulation. It does not affect an existing pregnancy.5

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Plan B, a brand of EC, as a prescription-only drug in 1999. Over the next 15 years, after further testing, public comment periods, and federal court rulings, the FDA gradually broadened the availability of EC. On February 25, 2014, the FDA approved one-pill EC products for unrestricted sale on the shelves.6

There have been many different types of FDA regulations regarding EC over the past two decades, including over-the-counter or on-the-shelf access and age-restrictions or no age-restrictions, as well as previously existing differences in the regulations on Plan B versus the generic brands. As a result, there can be confusion from both salespeople and the purchasers. Over-the-counter sale indicates that a medication may be kept behind the pharmacy counter, but sold without a prescription, while on-the-shelf sale refers to a medication that is sold on the shelf and unrestricted. Thus, despite the fact that EC has been approved for unrestricted sale on the shelves for more than three years, potential buyers have reported finding EC kept only behind the counter, being asked for identification to verify age, and being denied the ability to purchase EC because of age or gender restrictions.

The purpose of this study was to explore the degree of access problems Marylanders face when purchasing over-the-counter forms of emergency contraception to inform ways that access could be improved. Results can be used to help with implementation plans for the Maryland Contraceptive Equity Act, effective January 1, 2018.

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4 In this report, the term EC refers to the methods approved by the FDA for unrestricted sale on the shelf unless otherwise noted. ella, a prescription-only method of emergency contraception, and the Paraguard IUD, which must be inserted by a health care professional, were not included in this study.


6 Uhl letter from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Methodology

Using internet searches, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund (NPCMF) compiled a comprehensive list of stores that would most likely sell EC. These included national chain, smaller state chain, and independent pharmacies, as well as big box stores (such as Walmart, Target, or Kmart) and grocery stores that had pharmacies and carried over-the-counter medications on their shelves. From July 2016 through April 2017, 40 volunteers were trained to complete surveys through onsite visits to the stores and phone calls. All Maryland counties and Baltimore City were represented in this study, with data collected of at least 30% of stores in each area. A total of 456 stores across the state were surveyed.\(^7\)

The data collected focus on points of access that could prevent consumers from obtaining EC from their local stores. Three factors were identified:

1. Whether a store clerk or pharmacist implemented an age restriction to purchase EC,
2. Whether the EC product was available on the shelf or behind the counter of the pharmacist, cashier, or customer service clerk, and
3. The cost of EC products.

For the surveys completed during physical visits to the stores, participants were asked to rate attempts in locating the EC products (from “Very Easy” to “Very Difficult”) to better understand how certain factors could influence consumers’ experiences purchasing EC. Volunteers also indicated whether EC products found on the shelves were in locked displays or with locking mechanisms over the packaging that would require the assistance of a store clerk to access.

Results

Of the 456 stores NPCMF volunteers surveyed, 406 (89%) were found to carry Plan B or a generic brand of EC. This data can be viewed as a snapshot in time. It should be noted that volunteers reported instances in which independent pharmacies or grocery stores that did not carry EC often referred them to seek chain pharmacies for these products. The data from the stores that were found to carry EC was used in this report.

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\(^7\) When there was conflicting data for stores that were surveyed in both site visits and phone calls, site visit data was used. When two site visits were in conflict, phone data was considered to substantiate the site visit data. In case of continuing conflict, the site visit data collected by a NPCMF staff member was used. If no staff member visited the store, the first volunteer survey was used. If more information was needed, NPCMF staff made additional phone calls to these stores to confirm data.
Age Restriction

For many years, Plan B and its generics were available only for women 17 and older. Seeing no medical justification, a federal court ruled in 2013 in *Tummino v. Hamburg* to lift all age restrictions. However, much confusion has persisted as new labeling has been slow to reflect the current law, especially among generic brands, and pharmacists and cashiers continue to inquire about the age of the individual seeking the product. When asked if there was an age requirement to purchase EC, 145 stores indicated engaging in such restrictions (35.7%). Figure 2 shows this statewide breakdown.

While some stores were specific about the age (13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 years old), others were vague. One pharmacy employee explained that they would not sell to a person who seems “really young.” Some stores even declined to share what their age restrictions were, answering the question, “Is there an age requirement?” with “How old are you?” which may indicate that decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and not by an individual store or corporate policy.

Conflicting information offered by stores confuse youth and those in their networks who are trying to access the medication in a timely manner. A young person faced with such a restriction at one pharmacy may not think to inquire at a different store nor have the means to travel elsewhere. Businesses with age restriction policies deny customers without IDs legal access to EC products, disproportionately affecting those less likely to have valid identification, such as low-income Marylanders, people of color, and undocumented, transgender, and disabled individuals.

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*Figure 2 - Percentage of stores carrying EC products that implement age restrictions*

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8 *Tummino v. Hamburg* 936 F.Supp. 2d 162
The figure below shows how the implementation of age requirements varies across Maryland’s counties. Note that for Caroline and Talbot Counties, none of the stores surveyed implemented age requirements. For more detailed information on each county, please see Attachment 2. Figure 3 shows the breakdown of age requirements by county.

![Percentage that implemented age restrictions](image)

Figure 3 - Percentage of stores carrying EC products that implement age restrictions - by county

Over-the-counter EC products - both generic and brand-name - have been approved to be sold to anyone, regardless of age or gender, since 2014. Despite this, quite a few store employees stated that would not sell EC products to men. One employee said that they would only sell to women, not men, older than 16. Another said that males “cannot purchase” these products. The survey did not include questions about gender, but several volunteers noted that a gender restriction was described to them unsolicited.

Location

Although the FDA approved one-pill EC products for unrestricted over-the-counter sales, a 2015 study completed by the American Society for Emergency Contraception found that just two-thirds of stores keep their Plan B products on the shelf. The results of the NPCMF study show that 189 Maryland stores surveyed kept the products behind the counter of the pharmacist or cashier (46.6%), while 217 displayed them on the shelf. Independently owned pharmacies were more likely to employ behind-the-counter policies (75%) than chain businesses (21%). It is unknown whether independent pharmacies do this more because they feel the

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need to play gatekeeper due to perceived age and gender restrictions, consult with the person seeking to take the medication, and/or follow store anti-theft policies.

Placing an over-the-counter medication behind the counter caused confusion for many of those surveying stores. “I shouldn’t have to spend 30 minutes wandering around a store looking for something that should be clearly marked and on a shelf, only to find it’s kept under lock and key by a staff member uninformed about the regulations,” one of our volunteers expressed. Figure 4 illustrates the ease of finding EC products.

One volunteer noted that the sometimes the products were out of stock on the shelf, but were clearly seen available behind the pharmacist’s counter – forcing a customer to request the product. While some may see it as inconsequential to ask a pharmacist or store employee about where to find EC, many people, particularly young people, may feel uncomfortable broadcasting their needs, fearing loss of privacy, discrimination, or stigma. Having a pharmacist, cashier, or customer service clerk act as gatekeeper to a product that is approved for unrestricted sale on the shelf poses an impediment to access. This is especially true for instances in which business hours for the pharmacy or customer service clerk are shorter than the store’s business hours.

Some of stores had signs on the shelves indicating that EC was behind a counter and must be requested. Other signs said that EC was in a specific location that did not exist in the store when they were in fact behind a counter. Finally, in some stores there were no signs about the location or availability of EC on the shelves and it could only be found behind the counter by an employee – information offered only when asked.
90.6% of the visits that were rated “Somewhat Difficult” or “Very Difficult” experiences by survey participants were of stores that kept their EC products behind the counter. 80.1% of store experiences dubbed “Somewhat Easy” or “Very Easy” kept their EC products on the shelf. Figure 6 shows a breakdown of how NPCMF volunteers indicated the ease of locating EC products for purchase.

Figure 6 – Statewide volunteer ease in locating EC products – by their placement within the store

Cost

In a 2013 nationwide study conducted by American Society for Emergency Contraception (ASCEC) of 400 pharmacies regarding costs of EC, the average price of Plan B One-Step was almost $48, and the generic EC products averaged $41.10

In the NPCMF study conducted from July 2016 to April 2017, the average cost of EC products in Maryland was $44.74. Prices for EC products ranged widely throughout the state where EC products are sold for as low as $20 and as high as $60. Many volunteers reported that pharmacists or store employees encouraged them to purchase Plan B online or print out the $10 coupon from the Plan B website. Volunteers noted that the less costly generic brands were more likely to be out of stock than the higher priced Plan B. During the course of the study, one of the generic brands began selling two doses in a single package at $60.

A few pharmacists and store employees explained to survey participants that due to theft concerns, EC is kept behind the pharmacist’s counter, or under lock and key behind the cashier’s counter. One volunteer reported that after seeing that all EC products appeared to be out of stock on the shelf, she was informed by an employee that the store actually kept the products locked in a drawer at customer service because of experiences with individuals removing the EC from the shelf and taking the medication in the store’s bathroom without paying.

Some stores that kept EC products on the shelf mitigated the risk of theft by displaying the EC products in locked boxes – either boxes that could be brought to an employee to unlock, or boxes that would require an employee to physically walk to the aisle in question and unlock the box to retrieve the product. Many of the chain pharmacies were found to secure the EC packaging in a locking mechanism in which the sales clerk would remove at checkout, eliminating the possibility of a private purchase at a self-service station.

Another volunteer observed that stores in more rural counties that chose to keep the EC packaging with locking mechanisms on the shelves seemed to be in areas with few or no family planning clinics or health department sites. These stores may be responding to theft among customers where more affordable access to EC through a local medical provider is not possible.

These concerns about theft may figure into the higher number of independent pharmacies keeping the EC products behind the pharmacist counter (89%), compared to other types of stores, rather than employing other anti-theft strategies. Although chain pharmacies keep EC products behind the counter at a lower rate (18%), they were observed to be more likely to use locked boxes to secure EC product packaging on the shelf.

**Conclusion**

While we are encouraged that 89% of surveyed stores were carrying emergency contraception, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund has pinpointed three points of access that limit Maryland consumers’ ability to purchase EC products. The imposition of unjustified age restrictions (as well as gender restrictions) and high costs have been identified as barriers to access. Once these products are placed behind the counter, individuals in need of EC can face other hurdles, such as shorter pharmacy or customer service hours as well as embarrassing or uncomfortable interactions with store employees. Unable to find EC products on the shelf, individuals may simply give up and leave the store empty-handed, potentially not traveling to another store for purchase, or reducing the effectiveness of any EC product they do buy elsewhere. Overall, the study found that independent stores placed more of these barriers than chain businesses. It should be noted that volunteers reported instances in which independent pharmacies or grocery stores that did not carry EC often referred them to seek chain pharmacies for these products.
Recommendations

NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund strongly believes that all Marylanders should have access to emergency contraception to reduce the risk of an unintended pregnancy after unprotected sexual intercourse or contraceptive failure. EC is a safe and effective option that should be widely accessible. Both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and federal courts have recognized that EC should be accessible without restrictions.

1. Store management and/or individual employees should not be implementing unnecessary age or gender restrictions for the purchase of EC. The safety of EC for people of all ages is settled science, and management and employees should not personally pass judgments about the medical needs of purchasers. Stores should create policies and train their employees accordingly.

2. Most stores already contain aisles that are an appropriate location for EC products, such as with condoms or pregnancy tests. EC should be available on the shelf so that people can easily locate it. Stocking it behind a counter makes it more difficult to access and may contribute to employee assumptions that it is a restricted product. If stores are concerned about theft, they should use different types of strategies used for other costly products.

3. Pricing considerations are not always within the control of stores and may be based on the manufacturer or supplier’s pricing. However, stores need to be ready January 1, 2018, when the Maryland Contraceptive Equity Act goes into effect. This law will require insurance and Medicaid coverage of EC without co-pay of the customer, including EC sold over-the-counter and on-the-shelf. Stores should begin planning for implementation of this law, including trainings for management and employees, as well as clarifying store policies regarding over-the-counter purchases of EC. Advocates should explore ways that EC products can be bought in bulk to be sold for less to communities with limited access to ready family planning services. For example, college students across Maryland have begun reaching out to administrators for EC products to be made available in student health centers, and due to the limited business hours of these centers, ensure access by stocking them at 24/7 campus convenience stores or in vending machines at reduced cost.

Additional Data

- The statewide data (Attachment 1) shows the reach of the survey and gives a better view of how a lack of access to EC products truly is a statewide issue (p.10).
- The county descriptions (Attachment 2) include the percentage of stores that implemented age restrictions, the percentage of stores that kept their EC products behind the counter, and the average price of EC products within the county (p.11)
- Differences in practices between independent pharmacies, grocery stores, big box stores, and chain pharmacies (Attachment 3) are detailed by county (p. 37).
- Other attachments include copies of the surveys we used to collect information, through both site visits (Attachment 4) and phone calls (Attachment 5). Many volunteers recorded more in-depth experiences from site visits (p. 40 and p. 42).
STATEWIDE DATA

NPCMF surveyed a total of 456 stores with pharmacies and/or those most likely to stock over-the-counter medications in the State of Maryland.

- 406 stores carried EC products (89.03%)
- 145 of these stores implemented age restrictions (35.7%). Independent pharmacies were more likely to employ these restrictions (71%) compared to chain pharmacies (21%). Grocery stores were observed to also engage in these practices (57%) as well as big box stores at (33%).
- The average cost of EC was $44.74
- 217 stores that sold EC kept their products on the shelf (53.4%), while 189 kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk (46.6%).
- Independent pharmacies were more likely to keep their EC products behind the counter, rather than on the shelf (89%) compared to chain pharmacies (18%). Grocery stores were observed to engage in these practices (70%) as well as big box stores (20%).

We collected data that paired volunteers’ ease of purchasing EC with the store’s placement of their EC products. Of the 294 stores for which we have this data:

- Of the 138 stores that carry EC products and are rated “Very Easy” experiences:
  - 130 stores kept their EC products on the shelf (94.2%)
  - 8 stores kept their EC products behind the counter (5.8%)

- Of the 48 stores that carry EC products and are rated “Somewhat Easy” experiences:
  - 19 stores kept their EC products on the shelf (39.6%)
  - 29 stores kept their EC products behind the counter (60.4%)

- Of the 56 stores that carry EC products and are rated “Somewhat Difficult” experiences:
  - 7 stores kept their EC products on the shelf (12.5%)
  - 49 stores kept their EC products behind the counter (87.5%)

- Of the 29 stores that carry EC products and are rated “Very Difficult” experiences:
  - 1 store kept their EC products on the shelf (3.4%)
  - 28 stores kept their EC products behind the counter (96.6%)
ALLEGANY COUNTY

Visited 6 stores

Called 20 stores (including the 6 visited)

Results reflect approximately 95% of pharmacies in Allegany County.

Of the 20 stores data was collected on, 15 carry EC products. Of these 15 stores:

- 7 stores imposed an age restriction during at least one phone call (46.6%)
  - The age restrictions ranged from 13 to 18 years of age
  - The average age restriction was 16
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $40.33
  - The price range of EC products was $28.44 - $49.99
- 9 stores kept the EC products either behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s counter, while only 6 of them had the products on the shelf.
  - Of the 6 stores visited:
    - 4 of them were dubbed as being “Very Easy” experiences trying to locate the EC products. All 4 of these stores kept the EC products on the shelf.
    - The 2 other stores were labeled “Somewhat Difficult,” and both kept the EC products behind the counter.
    - 100% of “Very Easy” stores kept the EC on the shelf, while 100% of the “Somewhat Difficult” stores kept the EC behind the counter.
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Visited 19 stores

Called 31 stores (including 19 visited)

Results reflect approximately 35% of pharmacies in Anne Arundel County.

Of the 31 stores surveyed, 29 carried EC products. Of these 29 stores:

- 7 stores implemented age restrictions during at least one phone call (24.1%)
  - The average age restriction was 17.
  - The age restrictions ranged from 16 – 18 years of age.
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $42.42
  - The price range for EC products was $29 - $60
- Of the 29 stores surveyed that carried EC:
  - 11 kept the EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or cashier’s desk
  - 18 kept the EC products on the shelf
    - Of the 9 stores classified as “Very Easy” experiences, all 9 stores kept the EC products on the shelf.
      - 100% of “Very Easy” stores kept the EC on the shelf.
    - Of the 3 stores classified as “Somewhat Easy” experiences,” 1 kept the EC on the shelf, while 2 kept them behind the counter.
      - Of the “Somewhat Easy” stores, 33.33% of them kept the EC on the shelf.
    - Of the 3 stores classified as “Somewhat Difficult” experiences, all 3 kept the EC behind the counter.
      - 100% of stores dubbed “Somewhat Difficult” kept the EC behind the counter.
    - Of the 4 stores classified as “Very Difficult,” 3 stores kept the EC behind the counter, and one did not carry EC products at all.
      - 75% of stores dubbed “Very Difficult” kept the EC behind the counter, and the other 25% did not carry EC at all.
BALTIMORE CITY

Visited 26 stores

Called 52 stores (including the 26 visited)

Results reflect approximately 43% of pharmacies in Baltimore City.

Of the 52 stores surveyed, 48 carried EC products. Of these 48 stores:

- 15 stores implemented an age restriction at least once (31.3%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 14 – 18 years of age
  - Some were arbitrary. One pharmacist said they wouldn’t sell it “To a young girl,” and would not elaborate on what that age might be.
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $45.07
  - The price range for EC products was $29 - $65
- Of the 48 stores that carry EC:
  - 25 stores kept the EC products behind the counter, while 23 kept the EC products on the shelf.
- Of the 26 stores visited:
  - 13 stores were classified as “Very Easy.” 11 kept the EC on the shelf, and 2 kept the EC behind the counter.
    - Of the stores classified as “Very Easy,” 84.62% kept the EC on the shelf.
  - 6 stores were classified as “Somewhat Easy.” 2 kept the EC on the shelf, and 4 kept the EC behind the counter.
    - Of the stores classified as “Somewhat Easy,” 33.33% kept the EC on the shelf.
  - 3 stores were classified as “Somewhat Difficult.” 1 kept the EC on the shelf, and 2 kept the EC behind the counter.
    - Of the stores classified as “Somewhat Difficult,” 66.7% kept the EC behind the counter.
  - 4 stores were classified as “Very Difficult.” All 4 stores kept the EC behind the counter.
    - Of the stores classified as “Very Difficult,” 100% kept the EC behind the counter.
BAKIMORE COUNTY

Visited 23 stores

Called 52 stores (including 23 visited)

Results reflect approximately 67% of pharmacies in Baltimore County.

Of the 52 stores surveyed, 49 carried EC products. Of these 49 stores:

- 16 stores implemented an age restriction at least once (32.7%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The range of age restrictions was 15 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $44.91
  - The price range for EC was $15.99 – 62.99
- Of the 49 stores:
  - 23 kept the EC products on the shelf, and 26 kept them behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
- Of the 23 stores visited:
  - 11 stores were marked as “Very Easy.” 10 of these kept their EC on the shelf, and 1 kept the EC behind the counter.
    - 90.9% of “Very Easy” stores kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 5 stores were marked as “Somewhat Easy.” 2 kept their EC products on the shelf, and 3 kept the EC behind the counter.
    - 40% of “Somewhat Easy” stores kept their EC on the shelf.
  - 6 stores were marked as “Somewhat Difficult.” 1 of them kept their EC products on the shelf, and 5 kept them behind the counter.
    - 83.3% of “Somewhat Difficult” stores kept the EC behind the counter.
  - 1 store was marked as “Very Difficult,” and it kept its EC behind the counter.
    - 100% of “Very Difficult” stores kept the EC behind the counter.
CALVERT COUNTY

Visited 5 stores

Called 4 stores (including 2 of the visited stores)

Data on a total of 7 stores

Results reflect approximately 46% of pharmacies in Calvert County.

Of the 7 stores surveyed all carried EC. Of these 7 stores:

- 2 stores implemented an age restriction (28.6%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 17 to 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC at these stores was $40
  - The price range for EC was $30 - $49.99
- Of these 7 stores, 4 kept their EC products behind the counter and 3 kept them on the shelf.
- Of the 5 stores visited:
  - 2 stores were dubbed “Very Easy.” 1 kept their EC behind the counter, and one kept their EC on the shelf.
    - 50% of “Very Easy” stores kept their EC on the shelf.
  - 1 store was dubbed “Somewhat Easy,” and kept their EC behind the counter.
  - 1 store was dubbed “Somewhat Difficult,” and kept their EC behind the counter.
  - 1 store was dubbed “Very Difficult” and kept their EC behind the counter.
CAROLINE COUNTY

Visited 3 stores

Called the same 3 stores

Results reflect approximately 37% of pharmacies in Caroline County.

Of the 3 stores surveyed, all of them carried EC products.

- None of these stores implemented an age restriction during our survey.
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $43.99
  - The price range for EC products was $35 - $50
- One store kept their EC behind the counter, and was classified as “Very Difficult.”
- Two stores kept their EC on the shelf, and both were classified as “Very Easy.”
CARROLL COUNTY

Visited 9 stores

Called same 9 stores

Results reflect approximately 42% of pharmacies in Carroll County.

Of the 9 stores surveyed, all 9 carried EC products

- 4 stores implemented an age restriction (44.4%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age range was 17 – 18
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $46.06
  - The price range of EC was $34.78 - $56
- Of the 9 stores, all of them kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 8 stores were classified as “Very Easy,” and one was classified as “Somewhat Difficult,” because they were out of stock, leading to the confusion of the volunteer.
  - 88.9% of the stores that kept their products on the shelf were labeled as “Very Easy.”
CECIL COUNTY

Visited 4 stores

Called 8 stores (including the 4 visited)

Results reflect approximately 61% of pharmacies in Cecil County.

Of the 8 stores surveyed, 5 carried EC products (62.5%). Of these 5 stores:

- All 5 stores implemented an age restriction (100%)
  - The average age restriction was 16
  - One store that implemented an age restriction would not elaborate on the exact age, but required an ID.
- The average cost of EC at these stores was $47.31
  - The price range for EC was $36.56 - $50.
- Of the 5 stores that carry EC, 3 kept the products on the shelf, and 2 kept them behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s counter.
- Of the 4 visited stores:
  - 2 stores were classified as “Very Easy,” and they both kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 2 stores were classified as “Very Difficult,” and neither of them carried EC products.
    - One store that did not sell EC said that “no pharmacy in the county would stock it,” but that the volunteer should try Walgreens.
CHARLES COUNTY

Visited 8 stores

Called 29 stores (including 8 visited)

Results reflect approximately 96% of pharmacies in Charles County.

Of these 29 stores, 27 carry EC products (93.1%). Of these 27 stores:

- 13 stores implemented an age restriction (48.1%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 13 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $45.51
  - The price range for EC products was $27.93 - $54.99
- 14 stores kept their EC products on the shelf, and 13 kept them behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
- Of the 8 stores visited:
  - 4 stores were dubbed “Very Easy,” and all 4 stores kept their EC on the shelf.
  - 3 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Easy.” 2 kept their EC products on the shelf, and one kept their EC products behind the counter.
  - 1 store was labeled “Very Difficult,” because they did not carry EC.
DORCHESTER COUNTY

Visited 4 stores

Called same 4 stores

Results reflect approximately 40% of pharmacies in Dorchester County.

Of the 4 stores surveyed, they all carry EC products.

- One store implemented an age restriction, asking for ID without specifying exact age (25%).
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $48.99.
  - The price range of EC was $35 - $65.
- 3 of these stores kept their EC products on the shelf, and all were listed as “Very Easy” experiences.
- 1 store kept their EC product behind the pharmacy counter (the same store that required ID), and was marked as a “Somewhat Difficult” experience.
FREDERICK COUNTY

Visited 14 stores

Called same 14 stores

Results reflect approximately 33% of pharmacies in Frederick County.

Of these 14 stores, all of them carried EC products.

- 7 stores implemented age restrictions (50%)
  - The average age restriction was 16
  - The age restrictions ranged from 15 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC products at these stores was $41.93
  - The price range for EC was $30 - $50
- 6 stores kept their EC products on the shelf, and 8 kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
  - Note: the 7 stores that implemented age restrictions all kept their EC products behind the pharmacy counter.
- 5 stores were dubbed “Very Easy,” and all of them kept their EC products on the shelf.
- 1 store was dubbed “Somewhat Easy,” and kept its EC products on the shelf.
- 7 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Difficult,” and they all kept their EC products behind the counter.
- One store was dubbed “Very Difficult,” and kept its EC products behind the counter.
GARRETT COUNTY

Visited 6 stores
Called same 6 stores

Results reflect approximately 75% of pharmacies in Garrett County.

5 of these stores sold EC

- 3 of these 5 stores implemented age restrictions (60 %)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 16 – 18 years of age
- The average price of EC in these stores was $44.99
  - The EC price range was $35 – 50
- 4 stores kept their EC products on the shelf, and 1 kept their EC products either behind the pharmacy counter or behind the cashier’s desk.
  - 100% of the stores that kept their EC products on the shelf were marked as “Very Easy” experiences.
  - 100% of the stores that kept their EC products behind the counter were marked as “Very Difficult” experiences.
  - The other store visited was marked as Very Difficult did not carry EC.
HARFORD COUNTY

Visited 11 stores
Called 13 stores (including 11 visited)

Results reflect approximately 31% of pharmacies in Harford County.

Of the 13 stores, 12 carried EC products (92.3%). Of these 12 stores:

- 3 stores implemented an age restriction (25%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 16 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC at these stores was $46.05
  - The price range for EC was $35 - $60
- 9 stores kept their EC products on the shelf, while the remaining 3 stores kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
- Of the 11 stores visited:
  - 8 stores were dubbed as “Very Easy” experiences, and all 8 kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 3 stores were dubbed as “Very Difficult” experiences. 2 of these stores kept their EC products behind the counter, and one store did not carry EC products.
HOWARD COUNTY

Visited 16 stores

Called 14 stores (13 stores also visited)

Total 17 stores

Results reflect approximately 34% of pharmacies in Howard County.

Of these 17 stores, 15 carried EC products (88.2%). Of these 15 stores:

- 5 stores implemented an age restriction (33.3%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 17 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC was $45.11
  - The price of EC ranged from $30 - $53.57
- Of the 15 stores, 10 kept their EC products on the shelf, while the remaining 5 kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
- Of the 16 stores visited:
  - 6 were dubbed as “Very Easy” experiences. All 6 stores kept their EC on the shelf.
  - 3 were dubbed as “Somewhat Easy.” 2 stores kept their EC on the shelf, and one kept it behind the counter.
  - 5 were dubbed as “Somewhat Difficult” experiences. 4 of these stores kept their EC behind the counter, and one kept it on the shelf.
  - 2 stores were dubbed as “Very Difficult” experiences. Neither of them carried EC products.
(Attachment 2)

KENT COUNTY

Visited 3 stores

Called 6 stores (including 3 visited)

Results reflect approximately 100% of pharmacies in Kent County.

Of the 6 stores surveyed, 5 carried EC products (83.3%). Of these 5 stores:

• All 5 stores implemented an age restriction at least once.
  o The average age restriction was 17.
  o The age restrictions were all 17.
  o One pharmacist told our volunteer that they check the age of the customer if they “look really young,” and would not elaborate on a specific age restriction.

• The average cost of EC products was $39.4
  o The price range for EC was $30 - $49.99

• Of the 5 stores that sold EC products, 3 kept them on the shelf, while 2 stores kept the EC products either behind the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.

• Of the 3 stores visited:
  o 1 store kept the EC products on the shelf, and was dubbed a “Very Easy” experience.
  o 2 stores kept their EC products behind the counter, and each were dubbed “Somewhat Difficult” experiences.
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Visited 43 stores – 38 included for ease of purchase, because 5 couldn’t be confirmed

Called 44 stores (including 43 visited)

Results reflect approximately 34% of pharmacies in Montgomery County.

Of these 44 stores, 36 carried EC products (81.8%).

*Note: We left out 5 stores due to conflicting information received during phone calls and visits. While we would usually use the data from the in-person visits, these 5 stores were among one large grocery store chain, and this seemed to be a trend. For example, one of these stores told us over the phone that they have EC products, and the price, and that there was an age restriction. However, when our volunteer entered that store, they were informed that this location did not carry any EC products, and was referred to another grocery store instead.

Of the 36 stores that definitely carried EC products:

- 8 implemented an age restriction (22.2%)
  - Including the stores where we could not verify if they sold EC: 12 (33.3%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 16 – 18
  - One pharmacist indicated that males must be 18 to purchase EC
- The average cost of EC products was $47.88
  - The price of EC ranged from $29.99 - $69
- 18 of these stores keep their EC products on the shelf, and 18 keep their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
  - 17 stores were dubbed “Very Easy” experiences. 15 of these stores kept their EC products on the shelf (88.2%)
  - 11 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Easy” experiences. 9 of them kept their EC behind the counter (81.8%).
  - 5 stores were dubbed as “Somewhat Difficult” experiences. 4 of these stores kept their EC behind the counter (80%).
  - 5 stores were dubbed as “Very Difficult” experiences. Two stores don’t carry EC products, and the 3 that do, kept them behind the counter (100%).
PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY

Visited 36 stores

Called 55 stores (including 36 stores visited)

Results reflect approximately 42% of pharmacies in Prince George’s County.

Of these 55 stores, 50 sell EC products (90.9%). Of these 50 stores:

- 17 stores implemented age restrictions at least once (34 %)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 13 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC products was $46.21
  - The price range for EC was $29.99 - $59.99
- 31 stores kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk, while 19 stores kept their EC products on the shelf.
- Of the 36 stores visited:
  - 13 stores were classified as “Very Easy” experiences. 11 of these stores kept their EC products on the shelf (84.6%). One store kept their EC behind the counter, and one store did not carry EC.
  - 8 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Easy” experiences. 6 of these stores (75%) kept their EC products behind the counter, while 2 kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 7 stores were dubbed as “Somewhat Difficult” experiences. They all kept their EC products behind the counter.
  - 8 stores were dubbed as “Very Difficult” experiences. 6 of them kept their EC products behind the counter (75%). The other 2 did not sell EC products.
QUEEN ANNE’S COUNTY

Visited 6 stores

Called same 6 stores

Results reflect approximately 100% of pharmacies in Queen Anne’s County.

Of these 6 stores, all 6 carry EC product.

- 1 store implemented an age restriction
  - The age restriction was 17

- The average cost of EC products was $46.82
  - The price range for EC products was $39.99 – 49.99

- 5 stores kept their EC products on the shelf. 4 of these stores were labelled as “Very Easy” experiences.
  - 1 store was labelled as a “Somewhat Difficult” experience, because the EC products were located away from other Family Planning, Fertility, and Feminine Hygiene products, causing confusion.

- 1 store kept their EC behind the pharmacy counter, and was labelled as a “Very Difficult” experience. Consequently, this was the pharmacy that implemented an age restriction.
ST. MARY’S COUNTY

Visited 9 stores

Called 17 stores (including 9 stores visited)

Results reflect approximately 90% of pharmacies in St. Mary’s County.

Of the 17 stores surveyed, 16 carried EC products (94.1%). Of these 16 stores:

- 8 stores implemented an age restriction (50%).
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The range of age restrictions was $27 - $60.03

- The average cost of EC products was $48.11
  - The price range for EC products was $27 - $60

- 8 stores kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk. Another 8 stores kept their EC products on the shelf, and 1 store did not carry EC.
  - 4 stores were dubbed as “Very Easy” experiences. 3 of these stores kept their EC products on the shelf (75%), and 1 store kept these products behind the counter.
  - 1 store was dubbed as a “Somewhat Easy” experience, and kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 3 stores were dubbed as “Somewhat Difficult” experiences. 2 of these stores kept their EC products behind the counter, and 1 did not carry EC products.
  - 1 store was dubbed as a “Very Difficult” experience, and kept their EC products behind the counter.
SOMERSET COUNTY

Visited 0 stores

Called 5 stores

Results reflect approximately 83% of pharmacies in Somerset County.

Of these 5 stores 4 carried EC products (80%). Of these 4 stores:

- 3 stores implemented an age restriction at least once.
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 17 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC products at these stores is $45.45
  - The price range of EC products is $39.99 - $54.99
- All 4 of these stores kept their EC products behind the pharmacy counter.
TALBOT COUNTY

Visited 7 stores

Called same 7 stores

Results reflect approximately 63% of pharmacies in Talbot County.

Of these 7 stores, 5 carried EC products (71.4%). Of these 5 stores:

- None of these stores implemented age restrictions.
- The average cost of EC products was $45.24
  - The price range for EC products was $35 - $49.99
- 4 stores kept their EC products on the shelf (80%) and the other store kept their EC products behind the counter.
  - All 4 stores with EC products on the shelf were dubbed a “Very Easy” experiences.
  - The store that kept EC products behind the counter was dubbed a “Somewhat Difficult” experience.
WASHINGTON COUNTY

Visited 14 stores

Called the same 14 stores

Results reflect approximately 46% of pharmacies in Washington County.

Of these 14 stores, 12 carried EC products (85.7%). Of these 12 stores:

- 2 stores implemented age restrictions (16.7%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 17 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC products was $47.87
  - The price range of EC products was $40 - $50
- 10 stores kept their EC products on the shelf (76.9%), while 2 kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
  - 7 stores were dubbed “Very Easy” experiences, and they all kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 1 store was dubbed a “Somewhat Easy” experience, and kept its EC products on the shelf.
  - 3 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Difficult” experiences. One store kept the EC product on the shelf, and one store kept it behind the counter. One store did not carry EC products.
  - 3 stores were dubbed “Very Difficult” experiences. One store kept the EC product on the shelf, and one store kept it behind the counter. One store did not carry EC products.
WICOMICO COUNTY

Visited 18 stores

Called 24 stores (including 18 visited)

Results reflect approximately 85% of pharmacies in Wicomico County.

Of the 24 stores surveyed, 20 carried EC products (83.3%). Of these 20 stores:

- 11 stores implemented an age restriction (55%)
  - The average age restriction was 17
  - The age restrictions ranged from 17 – 18 years of age
- The average cost of EC products was $42.41
  - The price range of EC products was $20 - $59
- 10 stores kept their EC products on the shelf, while the other 10 kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
- Of the 18 stores visited:
  - 7 stores were dubbed “Very Easy” experiences, and all 7 of them kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 3 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Easy” experiences. 2 kept their EC products on the shelf (66.7%), and 1 kept their EC products behind the counter.
  - 5 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Difficult” experiences, and they all kept their EC products behind the counter.
  - 3 stores were dubbed “Very Difficult” experiences. 2 of them kept their EC products behind the counter (66.7%), and 1 did not carry EC products.
WORCESTER COUNTY

Visited 10 stores

Called 13 stores (including 10 stores visited)

Results reflect approximately 76% of pharmacies in Worcester County.

Of these 13 stores, 10 carried EC products (76.9%). Of these 10 stores:

- 2 stores implemented an age restriction (20%)
  - 1 store said the age restriction was 17
  - The pharmacist indicated one would need to present an ID, but would not explicitly say what age someone needed to be to purchase the product.
- The average price of EC products was $41.78
  - The price range of EC products was $25 - $59.99
- 7 stores kept their EC products on the shelf, and 3 kept their EC products behind either the pharmacy counter or the cashier’s desk.
- Of the 10 stores visited:
  - 4 stores were dubbed “Very Easy” experiences, and all of them kept their EC products on the shelf.
  - 2 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Easy” experiences. 1 kept its EC behind the counter, and 1 kept its EC on the shelf.
  - 2 stores were dubbed “Somewhat Difficult” experiences, and all of them kept their EC products behind the counter.
  - 2 stores were dubbed “Very Difficult” experiences. Neither of them sold EC products.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment 3: Breakdown by store type in each county</th>
<th>Number of sites surveyed</th>
<th>Stores imposed age restriction</th>
<th>EC behind the counter</th>
<th>EC on the shelf</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Independent pharmacy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chain pharmacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Talbot</strong></td>
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<td>• Big box store</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chain pharmacy</td>
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<td><strong>Washington</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Independent pharmacy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>• Big box store</td>
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<td>• Chain pharmacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Independent pharmacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Big box store</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chain pharmacy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td><strong>Worchester</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Independent pharmacy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Big box store</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chain pharmacy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>86%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Independent pharmacy</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Grocery store</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Big box store</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Chain pharmacy</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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</table>
Emergency Contraception Accessiblity in Maryland - Phone Survey

Pre-Phone Call Information

Thank you for agreeing to become a volunteer with NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland! Volunteers like you are integral to our survey process; we appreciate your help and passion. Before you make a phone call to a store, please take a moment to fill in this information. Once you have finished this first step, you can read our Phone Script and make a call to a store.

* 1. Your name and email:

* 2. Name and address of the store you called:

* 3. Phone number of the store you called:

* 4. Date of this call:

Phone Script

Below are the questions we would like you to ask the store clerk you speak with. Please read through this script before you begin calling to familiarize yourself with the questions! Please answer every question to the best of your ability.

5. Hello! I was wondering if your store carries emergency contraception?

   - Yes
   - No

   If they DO carry EC please refer to the questions 5 - 10 and record your answers in the space provided. If they DO NOT carry EC, please skip ahead to question 11.
If they DO carry EC please refer to the questions 6 - 10 and record your answers in the space provided. If they DO NOT carry EC please skip ahead to question 11.

6. Do you carry any generic forms of Plan B? What options do I have?

7. How much does this cost?

8. How old do you have to be to buy Plan B?

9. Do I need to present my ID?

10. Can my boyfriend/brother/friend pick it up for me?

If they DO NOT carry EC please refer to question 11 and record your answer in the space provided.

11. Is there another store nearby where I could find Plan B?

Remember to thank the person you spoke to when you end the conversation!

Done

Powered by SurveyMonkey
See how easy it is to create a survey.
Emergency Contraception Accessibility in Maryland

* 1. Your name:

* 2. Name and street address of store visited:

* 3. What type of store did you visit in search of the EC?
   - Chain pharmacy store (CVS, Walgreens, etc.)
   - Independent pharmacy store
   - Chain big box store (Walmart, Target, Kmart)
   - Chain grocery store
   - Independent grocery store

* 4. How would you rate the level of ease it took to locate the EC?
   - Very Easy
   - Somewhat Easy
   - Somewhat Difficult
   - Very Difficult

* 5. Was the EC on the shelf in a box?
   - Yes, with an unlocked top
   - Yes, a locked box
   - No

* 6. If it was in a locked box, how would one access the EC for purchase?
   - An employee would have to come and unlock the display shelf
   - A customer would have to carry the box to the casher
   - A customer would have to carry the box to the pharmacist
   - It was not in a locked box

* 7. Was the EC located behind the counter at the pharmacy?
   - Yes
   - No
8. If you were unable to locate the EC, did you ask an employee for assistance?
   - Yes
   - No
   - I did not need to ask an employee for assistance

9. Did the store member assist you in locating the EC?
   - Yes, it was in the store
   - Yes, but they were out of stock
   - Yes, they called another store in the area to check availability
   - No
   - I did not need any assistance from an employee

10. If the team member called another location to check EC stock, was the product available?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I did not need any assistance from an employee in this instance

11. If you needed assistance from employee's during your visit, did you find them helpful?
    - Yes
    - No
    - I did not need any assistance from an employee
    - Other (please specify)

12. Was the EC you located brand name or generic? (Check all that apply)
    - Brand name (Plan B One-Dose)
    - Generic (Take Action, My Way Next Choice One Dose, Levonorgestrel Tablets)

13. What was the listed cost of the EC you located? (Check all that apply if there are multiple types)
    - $50 or more
    - $40.00 or less

14. Do you think there any other barriers to accessing the EC in this store not already identified in the survey?