

July 14, 2016

To: Honorable Governor Rauner

Office of the Governor
James R Thompson Center
100 W Randolph 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Governor Rauner:

We, the undersigned organizations, urge you to sign House Bill 5576, the Illinois Contraceptive Coverage Act, into law immediately. By expanding access to contraception for privately insured women and men, HB5576 will improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare spending in Illinois by helping women plan for healthy pregnancies when they are ready for them.

While the Affordable Care Act took important steps to increase access to contraception, research lead by EverThrive Illinois and the University of Chicago Section of Family Planning and Contraceptive Research identified significant gaps in access to birth control prescribed by physicians. This session, the General Assembly heard testimony from Lisa Peterson who has been battling with her insurance company to receive coverage without cost sharing for the birth control which she and her physician agree is best for her for almost three years. Lisa is not alone in her fight to access the right birth control and her experience shows how severely insurance practices can restrict access to birth control.

Birth control is one of the most widely used medical services in the United States--99% of sexually active women have used at least one type of birth control in their lifetime. However, choosing the right birth control continues to be a difficult and complicated process in which individuals must balance cost, ease of use, and medical factors, including family history and possible side effects.

There is a well documented body of research which demonstrates that insurance barriers between a person and their prescribed birth control, such as denying coverage of a prescribed method or requiring prior authorization or step therapy, decrease the likelihood that that person uses birth control consistently or correctly. This increases the risk for unintended pregnancies, which can lead to negative health outcomes for women and their newborn children and can create barriers to education, employment and other opportunities with long term health, social, and economic impact.

HB5576 guarantees coverage without cost sharing or utilization controls for all FDA approved contraceptive drugs, devices, and supplies, including voluntary sterilization for women and men. Additionally, it requires insurance companies to cover the dispensing of up to 12 months of birth control at one time, which has been shown to decrease costs for health insurance companies and decrease rates of unintended pregnancy. This is common sense, cost efficient legislation that is a win for women, the insurance industry, and the state alike. For that reason, it is supported by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Furthermore, the Illinois Department of Insurance and Illinois Central Management Services are neutral.

Please sign HB5576 immediately to ensure that all residents of Illinois will have access to the birth control that is right for them.

Thank you,

Illinois Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
Illinois State Medical Society
Illinois Pharmacists Association
Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Illinois Society for Advanced Practice Nursing
Illinois Primary Health Care Association
Illinois Public Health Association
Illinois Association of Public Health Administrators
Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium
Cook County Department of Public Health
Lake County Health Department and Community Health Center
National Association of Social Workers—Illinois Chapter
Ounce of Prevention Fund
March of Dimes Illinois Chapter
ACLU of Illinois
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
American Association of University Women
Catholics for Choice
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
Chicago Foundation for Women
Citizen Action Illinois
EverThrive Illinois
Health and Medicine Policy Research Group
Illinois Choice Action Team (ICAT)
Illinois National Organization for Women (NOW)
League of Women Voters of Illinois
Legal Council for Health Justice
McHenry County Citizens for Choice
Men4Choice
Mujeres Latinas en Accion
National Coalition of American Nuns
National Council of Jewish Women, Illinois State Policy Advisory Network
National Council of Jewish Women, Chicago North Shore Section
National Council of Jewish Women South Cook Section
Pediatric AIDS Chicago Prevention Initiative
Personal PAC
Planned Parenthood of Illinois
Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
The Section of Family Planning at the University of Chicago
Women Employed