



March 15, 2018

Chairman Hunt  
House Commerce and Consumer Affairs  
Legislative Office Building  
33 North State Street  
Concord, NH 03301

RE: HB 1822 an Act making hormonal contraceptives available directly from pharmacists by means of a standing order

Dear Chairman Hunt and members of the House Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you regarding HB 1822, which allows pharmacists to dispense hormonal contraceptives pursuant to a standing order entered into by health care providers. Bi-State Primary Care Association is grateful for the attention the sponsors are giving to this important issue in women's health. We respectfully request the committee recommend HB 1822 ought to pass.

Bi-State Primary Care Association is a non-profit organization that advocates for access to primary and preventive care for all New Hampshire residents with a special emphasis on the medically underserved. We also represent New Hampshire's 16 community health centers, which are located in medically underserved areas throughout our state. The community health centers are non-profit organizations that provide integrated oral health, substance use disorder treatment, behavioral health, and primary care services to approximately 113,000 patients, most of whom live below 200% of the federal poverty level or \$24,120 for an individual.<sup>1</sup>

During the 2017 legislative session, the legislature passed HB 264 establishing a commission to study allowing pharmacists to prescribe or make available via protocol oral contraceptives and related medications. In its final report, the commission recommended LSR 2018-3030 become law.<sup>2</sup> LSR 2018-3030 is now HB 1822 and is before you today. HB 1822 allows pharmacists to dispense contraceptives without a prescription if the health care provider has issued a standing order. Contraceptive use helps women and families prevent unwanted pregnancies and plan pregnancies. Spacing pregnancies has positive health outcomes for women and babies, such as reducing the risk of premature birth and low birth weight.<sup>3</sup> Preventing unintended pregnancy can help women manage certain chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart

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<sup>1</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration, Uniform Data System, NH Rollup (2016), federally qualified health centers are required to submit patient demographics, services offered and received, clinical data, and payer information to the Health Resources and Services Administration annually; BSPCA Survey of Membership (2016).

<sup>2</sup> See page 4 where the commission endorses LSR 2018-3030.

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/statstudcomm/committees/1351/reports/Commission%20Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Kavanaugh Megan L. et al., *Contraception and Beyond: the Health Benefits of Services Provided at Family Planning Centers*, July 2013 Guttmacher Institute, 8-9 <http://www.guttmacher.org/report/contraception-and-beyond-health-benefits-services-provided-family-planning-centers>.

disease.<sup>4</sup> Also, according to many studies, spacing out pregnancies via contraceptive use enables women to complete their education, gain and maintain employment, support themselves and their families, and invest in their children's future.<sup>5</sup> Clearly, providing access to contraceptives helps women to be healthy productive members of our society, and shows our support for their ability to make healthy sound decisions for themselves and their families. Allowing pharmacists to dispense hormonal contraceptives pursuant to a standing order entered into by health care providers with a prior prescription ensures women access to the birth control coverage they need when they need it.

HB 1822 supports women by helping them to plan their pregnancies and secure the health, social and economic benefits that accompany the choice to plan their pregnancies.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, we respectfully request the committee recommend HB 1822 ought to pass.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like more information.

Sincerely,

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<sup>4</sup> See Sonfield Adam, *What is at stake with the federal contraceptive coverage guarantee?* 20 Guttmacher Policy Review 8, 10 (2017), [https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article\\_files/gpr2000816\\_0.pdf](https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/gpr2000816_0.pdf) (citing Testimony of American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, submitted to the Committee on Preventive Services for Women, Institute of Medicine, 2011.)

<sup>5</sup> Sonfield Adam, *What Women Already Know: Documenting the Social and Economic Benefits of Family Planning*, 16 Guttmacher Policy Review, 8, 8-12 (2013), [https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article\\_files/gpr160108.pdf](https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/article_files/gpr160108.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*