



February 9, 2012

SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON PLAN B MEDICATION

Late last week, a reporter for a local newspaper requested information on the availability of Plan B medication on campus. We provided that information in connection with this student-initiated program, as we did with several local television stations. In the ensuing days, this program has become a topic for debate across the nation due to many print and broadcast stories, as well as an untold number of comments on various social media sites.

Since then, comments we have either received or seen in the media express both sides of this very personal and emotional issue. Commenters are deeply passionate in their opinions and are taking this opportunity to let us and others know how they feel. We also realize that for our students it is a personal decision based on their own beliefs and values.

Plan B is an over-the-counter medication available without prescription for those 17 years old or older at pharmacies and drug stores around the nation. The health center is **NOT** dispensing RU-486, also called the abortion pill. The center is dispensing Plan B, a single-dose medication that prevents implantation of a fertilized zygote, will not harm a developing embryo or fetus, and will not work on women who are already pregnant. Plan B does not contain estrogen and does not cause serious side effects in users. We are, as we have said previously, among the majority of universities and colleges in Pennsylvania and the nation to make Plan B available to students.

Many have expressed concern that the medication is available in a vending machine and it is being made available without what they consider to be necessary sharing of information prior to purchase. The machine, which vends only health-related items, is in a private room in our health center and the health center is accessible only by students 17 and older and not the public. Students proceed to a check-in desk in the lobby and after checking in using appropriate identification are granted access to the private treatment area. No state-supported or taxpayer-supported dollars are used for this service. Students, as part of the support services offered by the university, have the opportunity to discuss any and all important decisions in their lives with medical, pastoral or counseling staff. We are fortunate to have very dedicated individuals who will provide information requested by students and related support.

The question about the dispensing method is a valid one. We will evaluate through further campus discussions. I have contacted the FDA and invited officials to come to campus and review our dispensing practices. Yesterday, we began our evaluation in a meeting with various members of the campus community, including students, faculty, medical staff and others. Our evaluation will involve contacting other colleges and universities nationwide about their delivery method. After we gather that information and the information provided by the FDA, we will share that with the entire campus community and continue to seek input into any possible changes in delivery method. However, while

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we gather input and evaluate the situation, the University will continue to make the medication available for purchase through the current system at the health center as is being done nationwide. A university is a complex organization composed of individuals with diverse and disparate views. We do, however, share one goal — working together so Shippensburg students can have an education nationally recognized for its excellence and with the support services they need.

We appreciate all the comments, the concerns and, yes, even the criticisms as we do our best for our students at Shippensburg University.