

# Gov. Pritzker Signs Legislation Making Illinois Second State in the Midwest to Provide Birth Control Over the Counter

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**CHICAGO** — Expanding quality and affordable healthcare for Illinois women and families, Governor JB Pritzker signed HB 0135 into law, granting Illinoisans access to birth control over the counter. The historic legislation removes barriers to care that may have previously prevented residents from accessing hormonal contraception, including

lack of access to a physician willing to prescribe birth control. The governor was joined by healthcare providers and legislative leaders at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) College of Pharmacy.

HB 0135 also expands Medicaid to cover over the counter birth control costs for plans that currently cover physician prescribed birth control. Under the new law, pharmacists are required to receive training on how to counsel individuals on the variety of birth control options available to them.

“This legislation that I’m signing into law today makes Illinois one of the first states in the Midwest to provide birth control over the counter, making contraceptives all the more accessible and affordable in our state,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “In 2019, when I signed the Reproductive Health Act into law, I said that in Illinois we guarantee as a fundamental right, a woman’s right to choose. Today, we take yet another stand to fulfill that promise.”

Illinois is the second state in the Midwest to offer access to birth control over the counter.

“It’s simple: Birth control saves lives and prevents unplanned pregnancy. Family planning and reproductive health care is a personal choice that should not be limited by economic or social status,” said Senator Melinda Bush (D-Grayslake). “I thank my colleagues and Governor Pritzker for taking strides toward creating a more equitable health care system through providing greater access to contraceptives.”

“I am proud to have been part of this important piece of legislation,” said Representative Michelle Mussman (D-Schaumburg). “Allowing pharmacists to dispense hormonal contraception under a standing order is a common-sense way to increase the number of trusted health care partners and increase access to convenient locations, reducing unnecessary barriers to timely and consistent use of products women need to self-determine when is the right time for them to become pregnant. Planned pregnancies have healthier outcomes for both mom and baby.”

To ensure the price of contraception remains feasible, HB 0135 includes mandates for insurance policies regulated by the State to cover birth control that is dispensed by a pharmacist.

“At a time when access to reproductive health care is being denied in many states across the country and debated before the Supreme Court, and when access to this much-needed health care is limited by expanding hospital conglomerates that deny basic care for women, we applaud Illinois policy makers for making contraceptives available at the community level, in a pharmacy,” said Khadine Bennett, Advocacy and

Intergovernmental Affairs Director for ACLU-IL.

“Pharmacists are the most accessible healthcare providers that receive the most extensive training in proper use of medications; it makes sense to fully utilize pharmacists to expand access to ensure women are empowered in having access to effective, preventative options for contraception,” said Garth Reynolds, Executive Director of the Illinois Pharmacists Association.

“HB135 is a landmark piece of legislation in our state. By increasing access to contraception for the women of Illinois, we reinforce our state as one that prioritizes women’s health,” said Dr. Michelle Brown, OB-GYN, Northwestern University.

“Contraceptive access through pharmacists is key to allowing women to safely exercise authority over their reproductive lives, and by joining 16 other states in this initiative, we move one step closer to the goal of true over the counter contraception.”

HB 0135 is effective January 1, 2022. Provisions effecting the Insurance Code are effective January 1, 2023.