



washington view

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▼ Contraceptive Coverage: The Momentum Builds in State Legislatures and on College Campuses!

The push in favor of insurance coverage for contraception first started in state legislatures across the country. These contraceptive coverage laws require insurers to provide coverage for all Food and Drug Administration-approved prescription contraceptives in their health care plans. Since 1998, an increasing number of states have enacted contraceptive coverage laws and also have moved to cover contraceptives in their state employees' health plans. In the last four years, the number of states requiring insurers to provide equitable coverage for contraception increased from one to 17 (CA, CT, DE, GA, HI, IA, ME, MD, MO, NV, NH, NM, NC, RI, TX, VT, WA). Massachusetts and New York are poised to become the next states to enact contraceptive coverage legislation.

The fight for fair and equitable prescription coverage has not stopped in the halls of our state capitols. In fact, the fight has now moved to college campuses. In the past year, several colleges announced decisions to change their health plan to provide coverage for contraceptives. New York University changed its health insurance plan after hundreds of students signed a petition calling for the addition of prescription contraceptives, emergency contraception, and abortion to the health insurance plan. University of Virginia students also won contraceptive coverage after sending hundreds of letters to their insurance representative and petitioning the student council.

▼ What Can You Do?

You may think that an insurance company determines health benefits, but it's really your college that chooses what your health plan covers. Some schools choose to include contraception in their health plans, some don't. Let

your college or university know that you want contraceptive coverage included in your health benefits. Unless you and others speak up, your school may not realize that contraceptive coverage is important.

Here's what you can do:

- **Learn the facts about your health plan.**
How? Call your campus health center. Ask if your school's health insurance plan covers prescription drugs, including prescription contraceptives, for students, faculty, and staff. Request a printed copy of the policy. If your plan covers birth control, does it cover it to the same extent and on the same basis as it covers other drugs?
- **Who decides what the plan covers?**
If your health insurance plan does cover prescription drugs, but excludes or limits coverage of contraceptives, contact your school's insurance representative today! Tell your school to do the right thing and cover your prescription contraception. Not sure who your insurance representative is? Contact your school's health center and/or the Office of the Dean of Students.
- **Ask for contraceptive coverage.**
Send a personal letter or a petition signed by other students to your insurance representative. Ask your college to add contraceptive coverage to its health insurance plan. You don't have to do it alone! Involve other students, faculty, and staff. There's power in numbers!

*Need help with a letter or petition?
Contact ZPG's Government Relations
Department at 1-800-767-1956.*

