

Planned Parenthood Wants Cheaper Pills

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(April 29, 2008) Planned Parenthood is pressuring lawmakers to increase funding for more affordable birth control for college students, claiming students are being forced to decide between buying food or birth control pills.

“Birth control pills or dinner? Pills or a tank of gas? That's the decision college students and low-income women are facing around the country,” Planned Parenthood president Cecile Richards said in a e-mail to supporters that was obtained by *LifeNews*.

Richards claims a “legislative error” caused an unintended rise in the price of birth control pills and wants Congress to fix the problem.

What Richards is referring to is the sweet deal on birth control pills drug companies have been giving to college health clinics for the last 20 years. However, due to a provision included in the Deficit Reduction Act, as of January 1, 2007, these clinics were cut off from accessing the low-cost birth control that made it possible for college health clinics to pass along huge savings to college students. The price of a monthly supply of pills went from \$5-\$10 to \$40-\$50 per pack.

“Skyrocketing prices are making it much harder for college students and low-income women to access the family planning services they need to help them prevent unintended pregnancy,” said a recent Planned Parenthood press release. “This crisis affects the estimated three million college women who take oral contraception, and hundreds of thousands of low-income women who obtain birth control through safety-net providers.”

Richards is now asking supporters to lobby Congress which is close to voting on several bills that could restore affordable birth control. One of these bills, the Prevention Through Affordable Access Act, is sponsored by Democratic presidential candidates Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) and Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY).

Wendy Wright, the president of Concerned Women for America, told LifeNews.com that Planned Parenthood is painting a false picture of the problem of high priced birth control for college students.

“If it is truly a choice between groceries and birth control pills, then many women will make the responsible choice to not engage in sexual activity – an overall healthier decision,” she said. “Women will not only not get pregnant, they won't be at risk of sexually-transmitted diseases and emotional entanglements.”

Wright also pointed out the huge mark-up on the cost of birth control pills Planned Parenthood was passing along to the state of California that caused such a controversy in California earlier this year. According to the former vice-president of finance and administration for Planned Parenthood of Los Angeles, the organization has overcharged California taxpayers by at least

\$180 million in the last decade. While other clinics charge the state between \$8-\$9 for a cycle of pills, Planned Parenthood was charging almost \$12.

This may be part of the reason why Planned Parenthood pocketed over \$1 billion in income during the last fiscal year, a figure that includes more than \$300 million in taxpayer funds.

Wright suggested they consider paying for the birth control themselves for women who are in these supposedly dire situations.

“Planned Parenthood could dip into its swollen bank accounts to subsidize the birth control pills,” she said.

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