



## **2010 *Back Up Your Birth Control* Take Action Toolkit**

The 2010 *Back Up Your Birth Control (BUYBC)* Day of Action is Wednesday, March 24, 2010. This is the ninth year of the *Back Up Your Birth Control Campaign*, a national initiative to raise awareness about and expand access to emergency contraception (EC). Every year, a partnership of leading national advocacy organizations, service providers, and other community stakeholders conduct educational outreach and offer free services, culminating in the Day of Action.

This year's campaign will continue to address the repercussions of a "dual-label" environment, in which EC is available to women and men who are 17 and older over the counter (OTC) in pharmacies, but young women who are 16 and younger are still required to obtain a prescription from a health care provider before they can purchase EC at a pharmacy. The campaign will also draw attention to limited EC access among teens, college students, sexual assault and domestic violence survivors, and immigrant and low-income women.

We invite you and your activists to participate in the 2010 *BUYBC* Campaign by using our free educational materials featuring Rosie the Riveter (available for order at [www.BackUpYourBirthControl.org](http://www.BackUpYourBirthControl.org)) to educate others about how EC works, highlight the specific challenges that women face when trying to obtain EC, identify sources of free and low-cost EC, and applaud efforts to remove the remaining barriers to EC access. We hope that this Toolkit which features suggestions of ways you can help raise awareness of and expand access to EC among various groups will be useful. Thank you for your efforts to ensure all women can back up their birth control with EC!

### TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUR ACTIVISTS

#### **EC Education for Teen Educators and Teens**

- Host a party, film screening, "Battle of the Bands," or sporting event and distribute *BUYBC* materials on what EC is and where teens can get it.
- Distribute *BUYBC* materials in places that teens frequent, such as malls, movie theatres, and affordable restaurants.
- Join our online community. Add *Back Up Your Birth Control* as a friend on MySpace and Facebook and invite your friends, co-workers, and the teens you work with to do the same. You can also link to the *Back Up Your Birth Control* site on your organization's website and insert our Rosie button into your email signature or blog to spread the word about EC!
- Partner with local medical groups and organizations to plan a *BUYBC* event such as "How to Talk to your Doctor about EC." Teens who attend can become EC resources for other teens who may be hesitant to speak to their healthcare provider about birth control and EC.
- Make sure that the medical providers in your community are prepared to talk with teen patients about EC. Many providers may not ordinarily raise the subject of birth

control with their younger patients. Others may mention it to teen patients, but not take the initiative to dispel myths that surround EC.

- Encourage teens to write to their state and federal elected officials to demand that the FDA remove age restrictions on over-the-counter sales of EC. Teens who are willing to share their experiences of needing and/or being unable to access EC can serve as powerful reminders to politicians and the public of the ongoing need for EC education and increased access for teens.
- Research the sex education curricula (if any) of your public schools to determine if teens are learning about EC. If not, contact school administrators and teachers to promote the inclusion of EC in sex education courses. To express your concern that EC is being excluded from curricula although it is a safe and effective way to reduce the risk of pregnancy, you can attend a school board meeting. If your public schools are educating teens about EC, thank them for prioritizing the reproductive health of their students!
- To assist teens who are 16 or younger with accessing EC in the 'dual-label' environment, host an information session or distribute information about free or low-cost healthcare providers in your area who understand the importance of timely EC access. For a list of Title X clinics, which serve low-income women and teens, visit the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association webpage: <http://www.nfprha.org>.

#### **Local Media:**

- Send a press release or local press advisory to media outlets highlighting your *BUYBC* Campaign related events. You can also write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Invite your local media (TV, radio, newspaper) to attend and cover your *BUYBC* event.
- Blog about your event to increase participation and interest in your *BUYBC* Day of Action activities. You can also send an announcement about your event to reproductive health blogs that you enjoy reading.

#### **Public Awareness Activities:**

- Distribute *BUYBC* materials in your neighborhood to raise awareness of EC and the *BUYBC* Campaign. Set up a table at your local park, farmers' market, street fair or other public places and events to distribute these materials.
- Distribute *BUYBC* materials in Spanish to women at salons, grocery stores, or community centers offering free ESL classes in predominantly Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. Be sensitive to the stigma surrounding the discussion of sex, birth control, etc. in certain communities.
- Use our graphics to provide a link to the *BUYBC* website through your e-mail signature.
- Create a hardcopy or electronic EC resource guide for your community. Include listings of phone numbers, addresses, and hours of area pharmacies, clinics and health centers that stock EC, along with prices so that women can identify their closest and most affordable source of EC. To see a sample guide visit: <http://www.prochoiceny.org/boc/>.
- Contact organizations that address sexual assault and domestic violence in your community and ask them to participate in your *BUYBC* activities. Collaborate with them to ensure that the unique needs of sexual assault and domestic violence survivors are being met. Find out whether your local hospitals'

emergency rooms inform survivors about and provide them with EC, especially if the laws in your state require EC in the ER. For more information, visit:

[http://www.gutmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib\\_EC.pdf](http://www.gutmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_EC.pdf).

- ❑ Organize an EC roundtable discussion with elected officials, clinicians and medical experts to identify the work that needs to be done with respect to EC awareness/access in your community. Identify groups of advocates and local elected officials that are willing to help bring about any necessary changes and outline future steps.

#### **Engaging your Local Medical Community:**

- ❑ Write to or visit women's health centers/clinics in your area and ask them to promote the *BUYBC* Campaign in their waiting rooms. Invite them to participate in your Day of Action activities.
- ❑ Invite an obstetrician, gynecologist or pharmacist to speak to your activists about the medical facts and importance of expanding access to EC in your community.
- ❑ Contact your local pharmacy board or pharmacy association and let them know you are willing to help them create packets of information about EC or distribute them to pharmacies yourself.  
Ask your doctor to sign up to be an EC provider or distribute EC through the Emergency Contraception website: [www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com)
- ❑ Contact local pharmacies and hospitals to inquire about their EC stocking and provision policies. Include educational materials and information to assist their staff with informing clients about EC, including advance provision of EC to patients.

#### **Legislative Activities:**

- ❑ Send a petition/letter/e-mail encouraging legislators to support state legislation expanding access to EC. Find out who your state and federal elected officials are at [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org) or your state government's website.
- ❑ Send emails to the Federal Food and Drug Administration and President Obama, urging them to expand over-the-counter EC access to all women:  
[commission@fda.gov](mailto:commission@fda.gov), [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov).

#### **Campus Activities:**

- ❑ Find out if EC is available at your campus health center in both prescription and non-prescription form and at what price. If it is not available or too costly for many students, send a formal letter to your college administration requesting that campus health centers stock EC and work with students to make it more affordable. You can also raise the issue of EC access on campus at the next Board of Trustees meeting and request a campus community referendum on it.
- ❑ Go "under-cover" and take notes on how your health center's pharmacists and staff treat you when you come in to request EC. Share your findings with health center staff so that any necessary changes to protocol can be made.
- ❑ Encourage your health center to use *BUYBC* materials in sexual health and peer education workshops.
- ❑ Pass out wallet cards and brochures on campus letting people know about EC and the *BUYBC* Campaign/website. Create and hang a large banner promoting the *BUYBC* Campaign in a highly frequented place such as a building where many classes are held, your student union, the main library, or a large residence or dining hall. You can also post EC facts on fliers and in chalk around campus.

- ❑ Distribute EC fact sheets that include information about where women can purchase EC and how much it costs to Resident Advisors so that college students have the option of learning about EC in the privacy of their dorm room.
- ❑ Urge students to have EC on hand *before* going away for Spring Break (i.e. hang posters, send an e-mail blast, post a message on MySpace/Facebook).
- ❑ Ask your women's or gender studies department, any sororities, and other interested departments and student organizations to promote and participate in *BUYBC* activities. Visit the *BUYBC* website to learn about the *BUYBC* Campus Challenge which awards a \$250 prize to the campus group that comes up with the most educational and creative way to spread information about EC!
- ❑ Invite a speaker who is passionate and knowledgeable about EC to visit your campus and promote the *BUYBC* Day of Action. Arrange for campus groups, sororities, the women's or gender studies department, and the staff of campus newspapers to attend the event.
- ❑ Organize and advertise an EC speak-out/open mic session in a busy area on campus. Invite both students and faculty to talk about the importance of timely EC access for *all* women. Contact local and student media outlets to cover the session.
- ❑ Work with fraternities and other clubs to educate male students about how EC works and where they can find it. You can stress that EC is available at the pharmacy counter to both women and men who are age 17 and older and encourage them to take responsibility for preventing unintended pregnancy (along with their partners).