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EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION TALKING POINTS FOR THE *BACK UP YOUR BIRTH CONTROL* CAMPAIGN

WOMEN NEED TO HEAR ABOUT IT. HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT. PHARMACISTS NEED TO STOCK IT. Emergency contraception gives women a second chance to prevent pregnancy. But they need to know about it and be able to get it in time. More than 60% of voters don't know there's a product that's been proven effective for preventing pregnancy after sex. And only 6% of women have ever used emergency contraception.

KNOW WHERE TO GET EC. Whether it's at the clinic, in the doctor's office, or behind the pharmacy counter, women of all ages need to know how and where to get EC. Especially in the wake of the FDA's decision to allow adult women to purchase EC without a prescription, while maintaining the prescription requirement for teens under the age of 18, public education is needed to explain the new 'dual-label' environment, so that all women can get EC when they need it.

YOU CAN BE PREPARED. DON'T WAIT FOR A CRISIS. Women can get a dose of emergency contraception to keep in their medicine cabinet – just in case. Women are more likely to use emergency contraception if they have it readily available. And studies show that being prepared does not make a woman more likely to use this method repeatedly or to change how she uses her regular birth control method.

THE SOONER, THE BETTER. Emergency contraception needs to be taken within the first few days of unprotected sex. Current labels for the FDA-approved product tell women to take it within 72 hours (or 3 days) to prevent pregnancy, and research now shows emergency contraception is effective up to 120 hours (or 5 days). Still, the longer a woman waits, the less effective it is. With emergency contraception, the sooner, the better.

COMMON SENSE AND COMMON GROUND. Let's face it. No method of birth control is perfect, and no user of birth control is perfect. Emergency contraception gives women who don't want to get pregnant a much-needed back-up plan. It has enormous -- but unfulfilled -- potential to make a real impact on preventing unintended pregnancy. Preventing unintended pregnancy: That's something we can all support.