



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H6038:
RELATING TO BUSINESSES & PROFESSIONS- PHARMACIES**

TO: House Health & Human Services
From: Kelly Nevins, CEO, Women's Fund of Rhode Island
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Women's Fund of Rhode Island (WFRI) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to invest in women and girls through advocacy, research, and strategic partnerships designed to achieve gender equity through systemic change. We are pleased to submit testimony in ***strong support of H6038***, which would remove the existing three-month limitation on pharmacist-prescribed birth control.

Currently, 29 states and the District of Columbia allow pharmacists to prescribe and dispense hormonal birth control, increasing access for those who face barriers to seeing a physician. Pharmacists are one of the most accessible healthcare providers, with 95% of patients living within 10 miles of a pharmacy. Yet, under current Rhode Island law, pharmacists may only prescribe a three-month supply of birth control, adding unnecessary restrictions that limit the benefits of this policy.

Many states have recognized the importance of providing long-term birth control access through pharmacists. ***For example, California, Oregon, and New Mexico allow pharmacists to prescribe up to a full year of contraception without restrictions.*** Expanding Rhode Island's policy to allow longer-term prescriptions will ensure that individuals can access the birth control they need without unnecessary burdens.

Passage of this bill will result in:

1. Decreasing Unintended Pregnancies

The unintended pregnancy rate for low-income women is more than five times higher than for those in the highest income bracket. Research shows that women are more likely to use and continue using effective contraceptive methods when obtaining them is easier and does not require frequent doctor visits. Many people face barriers to visiting a physician due to cost, scheduling challenges, or lack of culturally competent healthcare. By allowing pharmacists to prescribe without a three-month limitation, Rhode Island will join other states in reducing unintended pregnancies.

2. Better Economic Outcomes for Women and Their Families

The financial impact of unintended pregnancies is significant, particularly for low-income women. According to the Guttmacher Institute, unplanned pregnancies are five times more common among those at or below the federal poverty level. The ability to access birth control more conveniently allows women to plan their futures, pursue higher education, increase earning potential, and narrow the gender pay gap. Removing the three-month restriction will make it

easier for individuals to maintain consistent contraception use, leading to greater economic stability.

3. Healthier Outcomes for Women and Planned Children

Unintended and teenage pregnancies are associated with delayed prenatal care, fetal exposure to tobacco and alcohol, and poorer health outcomes for newborns. Expanding pharmacists' ability to prescribe birth control without arbitrary limitations ensures that individuals can make informed reproductive choices that support their overall health and well-being.

For these reasons, we urge the passage of H6038 to remove the three-month limitation on pharmacist-prescribed birth control, aligning Rhode Island with best practices in reproductive healthcare policy.

The mission of the Women's Fund of Rhode Island is to invest in women and girls through advocacy, research, and strategic partnership designed to achieve gender equity through systemic change. Our [Women's Well-Being Index](#) compares how well women fare against men on topics related to health, safety, economic security, education and civic participation in every RI city/town. Our [policy briefs](#) are written in response to the data found on the Index. You can find more about our work at www.wfri.org.