



Written Testimony from Upstream USA

Re: House Bill 6038, amending the pharmacist prescribing contraception law to remove supply limits
House Health and Human Services Committee - March 13, 2025

Dear Ms. Chair and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee,

Upstream USA welcomes the opportunity to submit comments regarding House Bill 6038, which would remove the existing limit that prevents pharmacists from prescribing and dispensing hormonal contraception for over a 3-month supply. Upstream is a national nonprofit whose mission is to ensure that the full range of contraceptive services is available to patients wherever they seek primary care.

In 2020, Upstream launched a multi-year program initiative in Rhode Island to expand access to the full range of contraceptive methods, and we have since partnered with a dozen clinics across the state. As a member of the Rhode Island Coalition for Reproductive Freedom, Upstream supports House Bill 6038 to authorize pharmacists to prescribe and dispense hormonal contraceptives without an initial 3-month supply limit, which would expand access to contraception across the state.

Pharmacist prescribing makes contraception more accessible and affordable. Patients cite the need to visit a clinic beforehand as a primary barrier to contraceptive care.¹ By authorizing pharmacists to prescribe an extended supply of contraception, this bill would eliminate patients' need for an additional visit with a provider, easing time, resource, and transportation barriers. Evidence proves that extended contraceptive supply policies have a significant impact. The 2022 KFF Women's Health Survey found that one-third (33%) of female hormonal contraceptive users have missed taking their birth control because they were not able to get their next supply on time.² This existing policy barrier could disproportionately affect Rhode Islanders because over 64,000 women in need live in contraceptive deserts across the state, making it challenging to access contraceptives after just three months.³

Birth control is safe, effective, and well-tested, and pharmacists are medication experts who are qualified to prescribe these methods. No other clinicians who are authorized to prescribe contraception are limited to an initial 3-month supply - this is a unique requirement for pharmacists that imposes burdensome roadblocks to patients receiving streamlined health care.

In passing this bill, Rhode Island would expand timely and affordable access to contraception for patients across the state. We urge you to pass H 6038.

Thank you,

Rachel Thornton
State Policy Analyst
Upstream USA

¹Grindlay & Grossman, "[Prescription Birth Control Access Among U.S. Women at Risk of Unintended Pregnancy](#)," Journal of Women's Health, 2016.

² Kaiser Family Foundation, "[Contraception in the United States: A Closer Look at Experiences, Preferences, and Coverage](#)" 2022.

³ Power to Decide, "[Contraceptive Access Deserts](#)" 2022.