



December 13, 2012

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

I am writing on behalf of the Public Health Institute (PHI) to express profound regret and disappointment over your unprecedented decision to overrule Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of over-the-counter sales of emergency contraception for all women of childbearing age.

Emergency contraception is medically safe for use by all women of childbearing age according to strong scientific evidence reviewed by the FDA and approved by FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg. Furthermore, leading medical associations including the American Medical Association, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Academy of Pediatrics have all endorsed over-the-counter access to emergency contraception.

For close to 50 years, PHI has been dedicated to building the evidence base for sound public health policies, including those that improve women's reproductive health. Safe emergency contraception – a product that can help to reduce both the number of unintended pregnancies and subsequent abortions – should be made as easily accessible as possible to *all* women who need it.

PHI has applauded the Obama administration's emphasis on scientific evidence as the basis for rational decision making by federal agencies. This decision represents a deviation from the commitment to safeguard scientific integrity and advance science-based decision making. Please uphold the principle of scientific integrity and reconsider your decision in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen Nevarez".

Carmen Nevarez, MD, MPH  
Vice President for External Relations and Preventive Medicine Advisor