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Press Statement

DATE: Thursday, February 2, 2006
RE: Advocates for women's health protest outside of Walgreens Pharmacy

Wichita, KS — Advocates for women's health gathered outside a Walgreens Pharmacy at 1555 South Broadway in Wichita, Kansas today to protest the actions of a Walgreens pharmacist who refused to honor a prescription for emergency contraception based on his "moral beliefs." The group demanded Walgreens fill all legal prescriptions in-store, without delay.

"When pharmacies refuse to fill legal prescriptions, it constitutes a form of discrimination," said Cassidy Proctor of Wichita. "Pharmacies should have procedures in place that guarantee individuals who have medications prescribed for them by their health care providers have their prescriptions filled without delay."

Emergency contraception is the same hormones found in regular birth control pills. It does not end an established pregnancy. Emergency contraception has been available for more than 25 years and could prevent 1.7 million unintended pregnancies and 50 percent of induced abortions each year in the U.S.

"Making women travel to another pharmacy to fill a valid, legal birth control prescription is not a solution" said Rosemary Yielding, also of Wichita. "Many women live in areas with only one pharmacy. It may take hours for a woman to drive to another pharmacy to get a prescription filled. Emergency contraception is more effective the sooner it's taken, and the time it takes to go to another pharmacy may mean the difference between preventing a pregnancy or facing abortion."

The pharmacist's refusal in this case demonstrates the need for Walgreens to adopt a clear policy that ensures patients receive their prescriptions in-house, in a timely manner. Other large pharmacies like CVS have changed their policies so that women can be certain they will be able to get their prescriptions filled in-store, without discrimination or delay. Planned Parenthood calls on Walgreens to similarly change its policy to ensure women's in-store access to contraception.

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Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri believes in the right of every individual to have access to reproductive health care services, including family planning services and products.