



Alaska State Legislature

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House Bill 345 Sponsor Statement

Unintended pregnancies have significant and negative consequences for individual women, their families, and society as a whole. Research links births resulting from unintended or closely spaced pregnancy to adverse maternal and child health outcomes and other social and economic challenges. With Alaska's fiscal challenges, we should look for ways to reduce costs in the short-term and long-term. House Bill 345 will reduce costs associated with unintended pregnancies by making oral contraceptives more easily available to Alaskan women.

In 2010, 48% of all pregnancies in Alaska were unintended. Alaska's unintended pregnancy rate in 2010 was 54 per 1,000 women aged 15-44. Of those unintended pregnancies, 60% resulted in births, 26% resulted in abortions, and the remainder resulted in miscarriages. Most unintended pregnancies are associated with significant public costs. In 2010, 64.3% of unplanned births in Alaska were publically funded, which resulted in a \$42.9 million cost to the state.

House Bill 345 seeks to reduce the costs of unintended pregnancies by making oral contraceptives more easily available to Alaskan women. A research study shows that women who were dispensed a 12-month supply of oral contraceptives were 30% less likely to have an unintended pregnancy than women who received a 1- or 3-month prescription. The study concluded that health insurance programs and public health programs may avert costly unintended pregnancies by increasing dispensing limits on oral contraceptives to a 1-year supply.

HB 345 requires health care insurers, including Medicaid services, to cover 12 months of prescriptive oral contraceptives at a time. Alaskan women often face challenges while trying to access prescription contraceptives. Women living in rural Alaska have less access to healthcare services and therefore less reliable access to prescriptive contraceptives. Fisherwomen working on a boat for two or three months at a time need longer supplies of prescription oral contraceptives. This bill looks to reduce health care costs in Alaska by preventing unintended pregnancies and providing Alaskan women greater access to family planning options.