



March 6, 2017

Senator Berta Gardner
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Gardner,

We are writing on behalf of the Alaska Nurses Association in strong support of SB 53: "An Act relating to insurance coverage for contraceptives and related services; relating to medical assistance coverage for contraceptives and related services." This bill will provide for consistent contraceptive coverage for the women and families of our state.

Supporting women's and family healthcare is a long-standing priority of the Alaska Nurses Association. We believe that every woman should have full access to the birth control method that works best for her, without barriers related to cost or availability. Senate Bill 53 would remove such barriers and give women more career and education opportunities, encourage healthier pregnancies, and make women and families less likely to be dependent on government programs.

- With perfect use, hormonal birth control has a failure rate of less than 5%, but for people who lack access to transportation, move frequently, or struggle to balance work and family, monthly trips to the pharmacy make perfect use of contraceptives challenging.
- One in four women say they have missed contraceptive pills because they could not receive the next pack in time; dispensing a one-year supply at a time reduces the odds of experiencing an unintended pregnancy by 30% and is associated with a 46% drop in the chance of needing an abortion.
- Consistent use of birth control is the best way to help women avoid unintended pregnancies; 19% of women who inconsistently use birth control account for 43% of unintended pregnancies, whereas the two-thirds of women who use birth control consistently only make up 5%.
- Publicly-funded or private insurance plans that dispense a one-year supply of birth control (instead of limiting dispensing to one or three cycles) lower their direct costs on follow-up visits and pregnancy tests, as well as on long-term unintended pregnancy management.
- Forty-six percent of women who unintentionally became pregnant report that they were using some form of contraceptive; providing a one-year supply of birth control will increase consistent use and reduce frequency of unintended pregnancy.

Access to reliable, consistent contraceptives should not depend on your insurance carrier. By requiring insurance to allow dispensing of a one-year supply of birth control, we can remove barriers to contraceptives, help women plan their families, and avoid unintended pregnancies and save money for Alaskan families and Alaska's government.

The Alaska Nurses Association certainly appreciates your support on behalf of women and families in our state.

Sincerely,

Arlene Briscoe, RN-BC
Legislative Chair
Alaska Nurses Association

Jane Erickson, RN, CCRN
President, Board of Directors
Alaska Nurses Association

The Alaska Nurses Association strongly endorses SB 53, recognizing our shared interest in removing barriers to consistent access to contraceptives for Alaskan women and families.

The Alaska Nurses Association serves to advance and support the profession of nursing. The Alaska Nurses Association's core purpose includes working for improvement of health standards and promoting access to health care services for all Alaskans.