

HB 17/SB 27 Contraceptives Coverage; Insure; Med Assist February 2023

Please accept this statement as support for passage of HB 17/SB 27. The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) is Alaska's state coalition of victim services providers. Twenty-three programs across the state focus on services to victims/survivors of sexual assault, stalking and domestic violence.

We agree with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (Committee Opinion Number 615 adopted in 2015 and reaffirmed in 2022) that all women should have unhindered and affordable access to all U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved contraceptives. While allowing for a 12-month prescription time-period reduces unwanted pregnancies; healthcare costs including physician visits; insurance refill charges; loss of time off work to get prescriptions; etc., we believe it also serves a critical safety function.

Reproductive or contraceptive coercion is a tactic used to maintain power in abusive relationships and can include sabotaging women's contraception methods or pressuring them into pregnancy. These acts of partner coercion and domestic violence can lead victims into unwanted or unhealthy pregnancy or if resisted, can lead to death.

In a 2006 study reported by Professor Evan Stark, Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration, in Re-presenting Battered Women: Coercive Control and the Defense of Liberty, 29% of the men stopped their partners from getting medicine or treatment they needed including access to contraceptives.

Birth control sabotage includes withholding money to purchase birth control; hiding, withholding, or destroying a sexual partner's birth control pill; or replacing or tampering with birth control pills without the woman's knowledge or consent.

Pregnancy pressure is when a person pressures a sexual partner to: get pregnant when they don't want to be pregnant; continue a pregnancy when they want an abortion; or end a pregnancy they want to continue.

At least providing the opportunity for women to get a 12-month supply of birth control will limit the danger posed by this protective activity (accessing contraceptives) from 12 times a year to only once. It doesn't mitigate all forms of danger which surrounds child-bearing decision-making, but it can save lives.

Member Programs

Anchorage AWAIC, STAR | Hooper Bay Bay Haven | Bethel TWC | Cordova CFRC | Craig HOPE | Dillingham SAFE | Emmonak EWS | Fairbanks IAC Haines Becky's Place | Homer SPHH | Juneau AWARE | Kenai LeeShore Center | Ketchikan WISH | Kodiak KWRCC | Kotzebue MFCC | Nome BSWG | Petersburg WAVE | Seward Seward's Safe Harbor | Sitka SAFV | Unalaska USAFV | Utqiagvik AWIC | Valdez AVV