

Governor Phil Murphy



photo: view of NJ Trenton DOM

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Expanding Access to Critical Reproductive Health Care by Removing Prescription Requirement for Self-Administered Hormonal Contraceptives

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TRENTON – On the one-year anniversary of Governor Phil Murphy signing the historic [Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/nn2xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCfAe-Nsp0S$) (https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/nn2xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCfAe-Nsp0S\$), the Governor signed additional legislation today to further the State's ongoing efforts to secure and expand access to reproductive health care. The bill (S-275) will allow New Jersey pharmacists to dispense self-administered hormonal contraceptives to patients without requiring a prescription.

Patients are typically unable to access self-administered hormonal contraceptives, including contraceptive pills, patches, and rings, in New Jersey without first obtaining a prescription from a licensed health care provider. To reduce barriers to access to this critical family planning tool, the bill requires the issuance of a standing order authorizing pharmacists to furnish self-administered hormonal contraceptives to patients without an individual prescription and identifying the contraceptives that pharmacists are authorized to dispense.

"While many other states are working to restrict access to reproductive health care – including contraceptives – our state continues to protect this fundamental right and expand access to this critical care on behalf of all who need it," said **Governor Murphy**. "The current requirement of an individualized prescription imposes an unnecessary burden on people who may be unable to afford or find the time to go to a health care provider for a prescription. Removing that requirement will promote health equity and ease of access to contraceptives in order to empower women to make their own reproductive choices."

This legislation comes at a time when other states (https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/3f3xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCfXBBS-kE\$) are allowing health care providers, health care institutions, and pharmacists to refuse to provide contraceptives or family planning care.

As such, access to contraception without a prescription will not be limited solely to New Jersey residents. New Jersey pharmacists will be permitted to provide these contraceptives to patients regardless of the patient's residency.

"Since the Dobbs decision, state legislatures around the country have put a stranglehold on freedom, passing laws limiting access to abortion, with eyes on restricting the right to contraception! This from the states that use terms like freedom in their state slogans and government seals," said **Congresswoman Watson Coleman**. "But in New Jersey, we both talk the talk AND walk the walk. New Jersey has emerged as a beacon of light to people across the country fearing for their rights, for their health, for their future. This law will help that light shine just a bit brighter."

In order to dispense self-administered hormonal contraceptives to patients without a prescription under the bill, pharmacists will have to follow standardized procedures and protocols adopted jointly by the Board of Pharmacy and the State Board of Medical Examiners and complete a training program.

"New Jersey is a leader in protecting reproductive health and rights," said **Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli**. "This law removes access barriers to hormonal contraceptives and puts in place the necessary safeguards and protocols that will protect patient health, safety and privacy for New Jersey's residents."

The bill is part of the Murphy Administration's ongoing efforts, in partnership with legislative and community partners, to protect the right to reproductive freedom and expand access to reproductive health care. Since the signing of the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act, other actions have included:

- Making grants (https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/j83xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCf9bsfbc\$) and zero-interest, forgivable loans available to reproductive health care providers to support facility and security upgrades;
- Enacting protections (https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/z04xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCfBiiQ7zw\$), for reproductive health care providers and out-of-state residents seeking reproductive services in New Jersey;
- Creating a 'Reproductive Rights Strike Force' (https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/ft5xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCfG77as\$) to initiate civil and criminal enforcement actions and develop strategic initiatives to protect access to reproductive health care on behalf of residents from New Jersey and other states, including through guidance to State licensing boards, to health care providers and other licensees, and to consumers on patient and provider rights;
- Initiating rulemaking (https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/vl6xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCf5jpnUqg\$), to require coverage for abortion services without exceptions starting on January 1, 2023 under the health benefits plans regulated by the Department of Banking and Insurance;
- Making funding (https://urldefense.com/v3/https://t.e2ma.net/click/f5q6ti/zw5zq7zb/be7xr1...!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtBA!NRtyxrh9uHu47pW-MV4QS85beU5587r10y2-wY_CXTEDyGr0ghc8VN4FCkPiZy_JplI9qftVZQCfR0GzKSI\$) available to Rutgers University to create and implement the "New Jersey Reproductive Training and Education Initiative;" and
- Expanding funding for the state family planning program, which includes clinics in every county.

The sponsors of bill S-275 include Senator Shirley Turner and Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson, as well as Senator Joseph Vitale, Assemblywoman Britnee N. Timberlake, Assemblywoman Angela McKnight, and Assemblyman Raj Mukherji.

"The enactment of this groundbreaking legislation reaffirms New Jersey's unwavering commitment to women's reproductive health and autonomy," said **Senator Turner**. "Since women are often juggling the demands of jobs and family responsibilities, going through the hassle, time, and expense of seeing a doctor for a birth control prescription rarely fits into their schedules. Removal of barriers to contraceptives is a great advantage to women, especially since there are pharmacies on nearly every corner, with some open 24 hours per day. We now join 20 states, the District of Columbia, and more than 100 countries around the world in freeing the pill, so that women can obtain birth control without a prescription."



"It's well-documented, the more accessible contraceptives are for men and women, the more effective they are at preventing unintended pregnancies," said **Senator Vitale, Chair of the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee**. "This is smart, practical legislation that puts us on par with numerous states across the nation and I'm proud that in New Jersey we are working to make smart health decisions easier, not harder."

"We are proud that New Jersey continues to be a place where reproductive freedoms are recognized and respected, and we are pleased that this new law will ensure more women can access the contraceptives of their choosing," said **Assembly members Reynolds-Jackson, Timberlake, McKnight, and Mukherji in a joint statement**. "By enabling pharmacists to provide hormonal contraceptives without an individual prescription, we are overcoming existing health care disparities and expanding access to contraceptives for patients throughout the state."

"We stand firmly in support of people making their own personal decisions about reproductive health care, including birth control and abortion," said **Jackie Cornell, Executive Director of Planned Parenthood Action Fund of New Jersey**. "One year after the historic signing of the Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act, New Jersey continues to move forward by removing barriers and increasing access to contraception."

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](/governor/)

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
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