

Governor Phil Murphy

Murphy Administration Takes Action to Allow Pharmacists to Provide Hormonal Contraceptives to Patients Without a Prescription

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Qualified Pharmacists Can Begin Furnishing Contraceptives Under New Rules and a Statewide Standing Order Issued Today

TRENTON – Advancing New Jersey’s commitment to [protecting reproductive rights](https://www.nj.gov/health/reproductivehealth/reproductive-freedom/) and expanding access to reproductive health care, Governor Murphy today announced several actions by the State which together have the effect of authorizing qualified pharmacists to furnish self-administered hormonal contraceptives to patients without a prescription.

Today’s actions implement [legislation](https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/20230113a.shtml) that Governor Murphy signed last year to remove the prescription requirement for self-administered hormonal contraceptives. That legislation was enacted on the first anniversary of the historic [Freedom of Reproductive Choice Act](https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562022/approved/20220113a.shtml), which codified the constitutional right to freedom of reproductive choice in New Jersey.

“In New Jersey, we will continue to protect a woman’s right to plan her future on her own terms,” said **Governor Murphy**. “Today marks an important step forward in our efforts to expand access to reproductive health care as we make birth control more accessible across the state. As we witness an attack on reproductive freedom across the country, New Jersey will continue to be a safe haven for women to access the care they need.”

Until today, individuals in New Jersey have typically been unable to access self-administered hormonal contraceptives—including injectable contraceptives, pills, patches, and rings—without first obtaining a prescription from a licensed health care provider. New rules adopted today by the State Board of Medical Examiners and the Board of Pharmacy authorize qualified pharmacists to furnish these products without a prescription, in accordance with standardized procedures and protocols jointly developed by the Boards and pursuant to a statewide standing order issued today by the New Jersey Department of Health (“DOH”).

“At a time of unprecedented attacks on reproductive freedom in America, New Jersey, under the leadership of Governor Murphy, remains a staunch defender of the fundamental right to reproductive autonomy,” said **Attorney General Platkin**. “Today we take another important step to reduce barriers to reproductive care so that all New Jersey residents, and those who visit our state, have access to hormonal contraceptives—essential components of reproductive health care.”

“Ensuring access to contraceptive options is important for supporting reproductive autonomy, preventing unintended pregnancies, and promoting reproductive health,” said **Cari Fais, Acting Director of the Division of Consumer Affairs**. “Eliminating the need for a prescription removes a roadblock to hormonal contraceptives for many and opens a new avenue for reproductive planning. We thank our Board of Medical Examiners and Board of Pharmacy for adopting meaningful regulatory changes to improve access to health care in our state.”

“For decades, hormonal contraceptives have empowered women with the ability to make decisions about their own reproductive health. In New Jersey, this expansion of vital reproductive health services and the availability of hormonal birth control without a prescription provides broader, more equitable access while putting in place the necessary safeguards that protect patient health, safety, and privacy,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Kaitlan Baston**. “I am proud to sign my name to the standing order that allows licensed pharmacists to furnish self-administered birth control to patients without a prescription and builds on the progress made under Governor Murphy’s leadership in reducing barriers to care and advancing health equity.”

Pharmacists wishing to furnish self-administered hormonal contraceptives to their patients pursuant to the new rules must complete a four-hour training program on patient screening, the selection of a self-administered hormonal contraceptive, and patient counseling.

When an individual requests that a pharmacist furnish a self-administered hormonal contraceptive, the pharmacist must first determine if the patient is eligible to receive it by following a process that includes completing a health screening questionnaire prepared by DOH. If a patient is eligible to receive a self-administered hormonal contraceptive, the pharmacist may furnish an initial supply of up to three months, with refills for up to nine additional months.

Removing prescription requirements to expand access to self-administered hormonal contraceptives is the latest step New Jersey has taken to prioritize reproductive freedoms under attack around the country in the wake of the Supreme Court’s reversal of the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision guaranteeing the constitutional right to abortion in the U.S. Other initiatives include:

- adopting [rules](https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/Adoptions/bmeado_05062024.pdf) to expand the pool of authorized abortion care providers to include Certified Nurse Midwives and Certified Midwives;
- making [grants and zero-interest forgivable loans](https://www.nj.gov/governor/news/news/562023/20230104a.shtml) available to reproductive health care providers to support facility and security upgrades;
- acting to [protect](https://www.njoag.gov/ag-platkin-announces-actions-to-protect-reproductive-health-care-providers-and-those-seeking-reproductive-care-in-new-jersey/) reproductive health care providers and out-of-state residents seeking reproductive services in New Jersey;
- making [funding](https://www.njoag.gov/ag-platkin-announces-5-million-in-grant-funding-to-provide-training-and-education-to-expand-pool-of-abortion-providers-in-new-jersey/) available to Rutgers University to support reproductive training and education for health care providers;
- adopting [rules](https://www.nj.gov/dobi/pressreleases/pr230918.html) requiring coverage for abortion services without exceptions under the health benefits plans regulated by the Department of Banking and Insurance; and
- creating a [‘Reproductive Rights Strike Force’](https://www.njoag.gov/acting-ag-platkin-establishes-reproductive-rights-strike-force-to-protect-access-to-abortion-care-for-new-jerseyans-and-residents-of-other-states/) 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.

For more information about where and how to access family planning services in New Jersey, visit the [Reproductive Health Information Hub](https://www.nj.gov/health/reproductivehealth/).

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