

ACOG issues recs to improve access to contraception

December 24 2014



(HealthDay)—All women should have unhindered and affordable access to contraceptives, although there are many barriers to access, according to a Committee Opinion published in the January issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

Researchers from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women reviewed barriers to [contraceptive](#) access and offered strategies to improve access.

The researchers note that knowledge deficits are a barrier to contraceptive use, and include lack of knowledge, misperceptions, and exaggerated concerns about safety; [health care](#) providers may also have

knowledge deficits. Unfavorable legal rulings and restrictive legislative measures can interfere with access to contraceptives for minors and adults, and impact the patient-physician relationship. Cost and insurance coverage are also barriers to contraceptive use, but as the Affordable Care Act goes into effect, obstetrician-gynecologists should advocate for continued expansion of affordable contraceptive access. Access could also be improved by allowing over-the-counter access to oral contraceptive pills. Other barriers include objections to contraception as an issue of conscience or religion, unnecessary medical practices that prevent easy initiation of contraception, institutional and payment barriers, and health care inequalities.

"The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists supports access to comprehensive contraceptive care and [contraceptive methods](#) as an integral component of women's health care and is committed to encouraging and upholding policies and actions that ensure the availability of affordable and accessible contraceptive care and contraceptive methods," the authors write.

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Citation: ACOG issues recs to improve access to contraception (2014, December 24) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-12-acog-issues-recs-access-contraception.html>

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