

# Rep. Kitchens: Assembly approves birth control access bill

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(Madison) – Wisconsin women could soon have easier access to birth control. On Wednesday, the State Assembly overwhelmingly approved a bill authored by Representative Joel Kitchens that would allow pharmacists to prescribe hormonal contraceptives. Representative Kitchens says in some parts of the state it is much easier to get to a pharmacist than to see a doctor.

“This bill makes it easier for women to get contraceptives, no matter where they live in Wisconsin, and makes sure the drugs are safe for each woman before they get them,” Kitchens said, “With more access to effective birth control, there will be fewer unplanned pregnancies and fewer abortions.”

Only doctors and advanced practiced nurses who meet the required qualifications may prescribe hormonal contraceptive patches and oral hormonal contraceptives in the state. Under the bill, pharmacists would be allowed to prescribe those drugs to 18-year-old women and older after they complete a self-assessment questionnaire and undergo a blood pressure screening. If there are any red flags, the pharmacist would refer the woman to their primary health care practitioner

“Studies show that increased access to contraceptives plays a larger role in reducing abortions than new restrictions in the law,” Kitchens said, “I am pro-life and this is probably the best and most effective way to protect life that we put into law.”

According to the Guttmacher Institute, the number of abortions dropped by 25% from 2008 to 2014. The institute linked the drop to improved use of contraceptives. Currently, 28 states and the District of Columbia allow pharmacists to dispense contraceptives. The bill is supported by the American College of Obstetricians and

Gynecologists, the Wisconsin Primary Care Association, the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin, and several other health organizations.

[Assembly Bill 176](#) was approved by a vote of 82-11 and now heads to the State Senate for further consideration.