

U.S. Sen. Baldwin, Colleagues: Press Walgreens, put national pharmacies on notice to ensure access to mifepristone

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and 17 of her colleagues sent letters to seven of the nation’s largest retail pharmacies urging them to provide the strongest possible legal access to one of the drugs used for medication abortions and contraception, mifepristone, for patients—and communicate clearly about their plans and policies. In the letters, the Senators request more information about the companies’ plans to provide customers access to mifepristone and underscore the importance of ensuring patients are able to get the safe and effective FDA-approved drug.

The letters—sent to Walgreens, Albertsons, Costco, Kroger, Walmart, CVS Health, and Rite Aid—come after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced in early January it was removing burdensome requirements and allowing retail pharmacies to dispense mifepristone directly to customers for the first time ever.

Following that announcement, Walgreens, CVS Health, and Rite Aid said they are pursuing certification to dispense mifepristone where legally able. Albertsons, Costco, Kroger, and Walmart have not announced plans to do so. But after over 20 Republican Attorneys General sent [threatening letters](#) to the companies, Walgreens caused widespread confusion about its plans by appearing to cave to the threats, telling the Republican Attorneys General the company would not dispense mifepristone in their states and so far failing to provide greater clarity about its plans to provide customers access to the safe and effective FDA-approved medication.

IN THEIR LETTERS TO WALGREENS, the Senators called out the company's confusing announcement about its plans to dispense mifepristone to customers, writing: "At a time of great confusion about abortion access, your company has done the disservice of adding to it."

The Senators demanded clarifying information about Walgreens' plans to dispense mifepristone, and stated: "While we are well aware of threatening letters you received with regard to the distribution of mifepristone in certain states, the response to those pressures was unacceptable and appeared to yield to these threats—ignoring the critical need to ensure patients can get this essential health care wherever possible."

"As you continue with the FDA certification process and fully comply with state and federal law, it is critical that your company also provides the strongest possible access to this vital medication and communicates clearly about this," **the Senators added.**

The letters were led by Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and also signed by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Jack Reed (D-RI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Peter Welch (D-VT), Tina Smith (D-MN), and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL).

Read their letter to [WALGREENS](#).

IN LETTERS TO ALBERTSONS, COSTCO, KROGER, AND WALMART, the Senators expressed frustration that the companies have not yet announced their intention to dispense mifepristone at their pharmacies—and urged the companies to pursue policies to provide the strongest possible access to their customers.

"We write with great frustration that [your company] has not indicated whether it plans to allow your customers to access mifepristone through your pharmacies," **the Senators stated.** "Pharmacists are one of the most trusted health care providers, and your customers rely on [your company] to help them access their prescribed medications. We look forward to hearing back from you about your intentions to ensure access to this critical FDA-approved product."

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Read their letters to [ALBERTSONS](#), [COSTCO](#), [KROGER](#), and [WALMART](#).

IN LETTERS TO CVS HEALTH AND RITE AID, the Senators applauded the companies' plan to seek certification to dispense mifepristone where able and urged them to ensure they provide the strongest possible legal access to the drug and communicate clearly about their plans to prevent confusion for customers.

“As you continue with the FDA certification process and fully comply with state and federal law, it is critical that your company also provide the strongest possible access to this vital medication and communicate clearly about this,” **the Senators wrote to CVS Health and Rite Aid.**

The letters were led by Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) and also signed by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Jack Reed (D-RI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Peter Welch (D-VT), and Tina Smith (D-MN).

Read their letters to [CVS Health](#) and [RITE AID](#).

In the aftermath of the *Dobbs* decision, access to medication abortion is more vital for patients than ever. Across the U.S., medication abortion is the [most common way](#) women get abortion care, and mifepristone is one of two drugs used in most medication abortion care. Approved by the FDA more than 20 years ago, mifepristone's safety and efficacy have been affirmed time and again by scientific evidence, research, and clinical experience—in fact, it's [safer than Tylenol](#). But anti-choice activists and Republican elected officials have repeatedly sought to deny patients across the country access to the FDA-approved drug. In addition to threatening pharmacies seeking to dispense the drug legally, anti-choice activists have filed an unprecedented lawsuit to try to effectively ban the drug nationwide and have [enacted](#) bans and medically-unnecessary restrictions on mifepristone in a number of states.

The letters come on the heels of Senator Baldwin [leading 48 of her colleagues](#) in introducing the *Women's Health Protection Act of 2023*, federal legislation to guarantee access to abortion, everywhere across the country and restore the right to comprehensive reproductive health care for millions of Americans.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).