Resources for Emergency Contraceptive Pill Programming

A TOOLKIT

PATH
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Resources for Emergency Contraceptive Pill Programming: A Toolkit

Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs):

A contraceptive method that can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex**.**

Resources for Emergency Contraceptive Pill Programming: A Toolkit

Tools to help program managers, policy makers, and donors make ECPs widely available to women in developing countries through large-scale family planning programs.

ECPs are special doses of birth control pills that can be used *after* unprotected intercourse to *prevent* pregnancy. Although ECPs offer a safe and effective contraceptive option, with some notable exceptions the method has yet to be widely integrated into developing-country family planning programs. The purpose of this toolkit is to facilitate the integration of ECPs into developing-country family planning and reproductive health programs. It includes resources for ECP advocacy, assessment, service provision, and evaluation. The planning and implementation tools represent best practices and experience that will help programs move through the steps required to make ECP services routinely available through health service delivery systems. The intent of the toolkit is to share widely an array of materials developed by PATH and by other organizations* as they worked in a variety of settings to incorporate ECPs into family planning services. It is hoped that by bringing together these resources in a format that facilitates their use, the toolkit can reduce duplication of efforts, redundancy, and unnecessary expense.

Although the focus of this toolkit is to facilitate access to ECPs—a method that can be integrated into a wide array of services through a variety of providers—the other emergency contraceptive method, insertion of an intrauterine device (IUD) within seven days after unprotected intercourse, should not be ignored. Because many family planning programs provide IUDs as a regular contraceptive method for ongoing family planning, they are widely available. If emergency contraception is to be comprehensively

*Materials for this toolkit were graciously provided by AltaCare; Association of Reproductive Health Professionals; Deliver Project at John Snow, Inc.; Family Health International (FHI); Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia; International Federation of Gynecologists and Obstetricians; Family Planning Association of Sri Lanka; International Consortium for Emergency Contraception; International Planned Parenthood Federation; Pacific Institute for Women's Health, Population Action International; Population Council; Population Services International; Profamilia Columbia; Reproductive Health Research Unit of the University of Witwatersrand; United Nations Population Fund; United States Agency for International Development; and the World Health Organization.

incorporated into large-scale programs, insertion of IUDs should be one of the emergency contraception options provided to women, along with ECPs. Where possible, advocates of emergency contraception should advocate at all levels—policy, public awareness-raising, and clinical services—for provision of IUDs for emergency contraception.

PATH began development of this ECP programming toolkit by conducting an extensive assessment of country program planners, country representatives of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and different organizations and individuals who have played an active role in mainstreaming emergency contraception. The assessment results identified the content and resources that developing-country program managers would find most useful in integrating emergency contraception into their family planning programs.

The toolkit is designed to help family planning programs build on the Framework for Introduction that was developed by the International Consortium for Emergency Contraception (ICEC) and move from the concept of ECP introduction to implementation. ICEC developed this introduction framework to guide its efforts to introduce a dedicated ECP—a product specifically packaged and labeled for emergency contraception—in several developing countries. The framework was included in ICEC's information packet *Emergency Contraceptive Pills: A Resource Packet for Health Care Providers and Program Managers* (published in 1998) and also was featured in ICEC's report "Expanding Global Access to Emergency Contraception: A Collaborative Approach to Meeting Women's Needs (2000)."[1] The framework spells out nine steps required to successfully integrate ECPs into large delivery channels: (1) assessing needs, (2) raising support at the national and community levels, (3) addressing product issues, (4) planning for distribution, (5) meeting clients' information needs, (6) training providers, (7) introducing ECP services, (8) monitoring and evaluating services, and (9) disseminating evaluation results. Building on this step-wise approach, ***Resources for Emergency Contraceptive Pill Programming: A Toolkit*** describes in more detail what is involved in carrying out specific steps and provides samples of tools used successfully in an array of countries. Each module of the toolkit focuses on one aspect of the introduction process and provides information and materials that can help advocates and program planners move forward to achieve broad programming of ECPs.

Countries vary as to current awareness and availability of emergency contraception and the status of a dedicated ECP product. Countries also differ in political climate and groups that must be reached with information about ECPs—what they are, how they work, and why it is important for women to have timely access to them. Because of this variability, the toolkit is designed as a foundation upon which users can build according to their needs, adapting information and materials in order to develop the best approach for their particular situation.

Resources for Emergency Contraceptive Pill Programming: A Toolkit is a resource for emergency contraception advocates, decision makers, and program managers—a resource that will help them identify the groups they need to work with and the information they need to provide as they move forward to successful, sustainable, routine provision of ECPs through their family planning programs.

[1] International Consortium for Emergency Contraception. *Expanding Global Access to Emergency Contraception: A Collaborative Approach to Meeting Women's Needs*. October 2000. Accessible through the Consortium's website at http://www.cecinfo.org/html/res-downloadable-mtrls.htm.