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MONTHLY
SUPPLEMENT**
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THIS ISSUE: THE PRO-LIFE BATTLE

OTC morning-after pill disastrous, say pro-lifers

By Jenni Parker and Bill Fancher

As the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers approving the over-the-counter sale of an emergency contraceptive known as "the morning-after pill," pro-life advocates warn that making the drug available without a prescription will have devastating consequences.

In a recent hearing, the FDA heard advice from a panel of 28 gynecologists and pharmacists on whether the agency should approve the over-the-counter (OTC) sale of Plan B, a morning-after pill that can prevent pregnancy if taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex. Since Plan B is most effective if taken within 24 hours, its proponents contend that it should be available without a prescription to give women faster, easier access to it.

The majority of the panelists said the powerful contraceptive is safe and women and girls could figure out for themselves if and when they should take it. The panel

voted overwhelmingly (23 to 4) that the morning-after pill should be approved for sale without a prescription.

After discussing medical and scientific issues, the FDA opened the meeting to the public, and several speakers raised concerns. About two-thirds of them, including several from the National Organization for Women, favored making Plan B a



Image of an unborn baby from GE's new ultrasound 4D technology

nonprescription drug. But some opponents questioned the pill's safety and its potential effect on abstinence rates and other contraceptive use. Others raised ethical issues, including whether the way the drug works, whether by preventing ovulation or implantation, would be tantamount to abortion.

Dangers of Plan B

Testifying against the plan to make the morning-after pill a nonprescription drug was American Life League Director Judie Brown. She insists that Plan B is dangerous and that the multi-pill regimen takes the life of a newly conceived baby. The pro-life advocate feels the FDA should never have approved the morning-after pill in the first place. "Our federal government should never sanction abortion in any form," Brown says, "whether the means of death are chemical or surgical."

In addition to Plan B's potential abortion-producing effect, Brown says it poses serious health risks to the woman or girl taking it as directed. As she testified at the hearing, the drug contains a chemical that can contribute to heart problems, circulatory problems, blood clots, ectopic pregnancies, and other serious and life-threatening problems.

Brown also pointed out that doctors ordinarily take a complete medical history of a patient before dispensing birth-control pills because prescribing them can be dangerous or lethal without access to that information, a safeguard that would be removed if Plan B is given over-the-counter status.

RECENT HEADLINES

Federal Court Upholds Ohio's Partial-Birth Abortion Ban

The American Family Association Center for Law and Policy is praising a Dec. 17 federal appeals court decision upholding Ohio's ban against partial-birth abortion, saying the Ohio statute "does not violate the Constitution in any respect."

Young pro-lifers hope RU-486 victim's untimely death will reinforce their message

The death of a pregnant California teenager after she took the abortion drug RU-486 sparked a pro-life campaign among youth in that state that may help save other young women. The pro-life youth organization Rock for Life launched the "Remember Holly Patterson" campaign in an effort to commemorate the teen's death and honor her memory by saving lives.

Pro-Lifers Say NJ's New Law Permits Human Cloning, Mandates Killing Babies

New Jersey's cloning law is now in effect and it has no shortage of critics. Among the latest are the Christian Medical and Dental Associations several pro-life advocates who contend that this legislation gives legal sanction to a culture of death.

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