

Campaign to Expand Access to Medication Abortion on Campus



Sample Op-Ed/Letter to the Editor

WWW.FEMINISTCAMPUS.ORG

WWW.FEMINIST.ORG

A report by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that most people seeking abortions are between the ages of 20-29, which includes college students. The Guttmacher Institute reported that in 2014, over 60% of those seeking abortions in California were in their 20's, which again includes college students. In a recent study released by UCSF, it was estimated that over 1000 students from UC's and Cal State's seek abortion services in locations outside of their campus each month. Medication abortion should be provided on campuses as this is the age group that most needs access.

Campus health centers already provide multiple reproductive health services, such as different types of birth control and treatment for STD/STI's, among other things. However, student health centers refer to outside clinics for abortion services. During my 3rd year on campus I made the decision to get a Nexplanon arm implant, which required anesthesia, a puncture on my upper left arm, and some down time. This procedure was much more invasive than taking abortion pills.

When it comes to seeking healthcare services off campus, a number of issues arise. There are students without cars who must rely on public transportation. As we all know, this type of transportation is often times not the most reliable, especially for those who are on a time crunch. Students without cars also have the option of finding someone who can give them a ride, but this can be an issue if the student wants to keep this information private because now they must disclose this with the person giving them a ride.

Another issue is that students have such busy schedules throughout the week and traveling to off-site locations takes up much more time than a walk down to the student health center. As a full-time student, making extra time for anything is really difficult. Most of my time is spent in class, studying, and going to work. Taking 2-3 hours off to go to off-campus for a simple procedure is difficult and would more than likely cut into my other activities. Sometimes there are follow-up visits after procedures, meaning that students will have to find even more time and again have to figure out transportation to the clinic. A campus is the epicenter of a college student's life: it's where we go to class, study, and for many of us, where we live, and it would be far more convenient to be able to access abortion care on campus.

Senate Bill 24, also known as the College Student Right to Access Act, is a bill that seeks to provide access to medication abortion for students at on-campus student health centers. This bill aims to eliminate a host of issues created by only providing this service off-campus by mandating that all public universities in California provide such services on campus by January 1, 2023.

Abortion is already legal, and in California, such services are covered by most medical insurance. So why are college students not able to access abortion care on campus? California needs to expand abortion access for all people, and Senate Bill 24 provides an important precedent that no healthcare service could be made burdensome to obtain. This is not a question of whether one is pro-choice or pro-life, as California has made it clear before that it is a pro-choice state; this is an issue of abortion care—healthcare—accessibility.