



June 6, 2017

Mr. Andrzej Duda, President of Poland

listy@prezydent.pl

cc: Mr. Marek Kuchcinski Speaker of the Sejm (Polish Parliament)

Marek.Kuchcinski@sejm.pl

Ms. Beata Szydło, Prime Minister of Poland

kontakt@kprm.gov.pl

Dear Mr. Andrzej Duda:

We write on behalf of Global Doctors for Choice (GDC), an international network of physicians from a range of specialties committed to improving women's reproductive health and rights. GDC is committed to the provision of high-quality medical care grounded in science and to the defense of human rights. We strive to protect and expand access to comprehensive reproductive health care through advocacy for evidence-based policy and medical research.

We write to urge you not to sign the bill which proposes to halt the availability of emergency contraceptives, such as the morning-after pill, as an over-the-counter purchase in Poland.

Emergency contraception allows women to prevent unintended pregnancies, particularly when other methods of birth control have failed, after a sexual assault, or due to other unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, this bill would force women to continue such pregnancies and thus result in serious physical and psychological pain and suffering for Polish women and constitute a violation of these women's human rights.

As physicians, we are concerned that you will have eliminated a valuable contraceptive option for Polish women. The bill will put Poland at odds with European Union advice: the European Medicines Agency (EMA) recommends that the drug ellaOne, used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex, should be available without prescription in all European countries¹. The EMA found that the drug could be used safely and effectively without a doctor's consultation.

A doctor's first duty is always to our patients. There is consensus among medical, public health, and human rights groups that access to emergency contraceptives is essential to ensure the best possible conditions for women's health. We are alarmed that the proposed law denies women access to emergency contraception, even in the most urgent circumstances. Women in Poland's rural areas will in particular be negatively affected, as they may not have the possibility to have an immediate consultation with a gynecologist.

¹http://www.ema.europa.eu/ema/index.jsp?curl=pages/news_and_events/news/2014/11/news_detail_002223.jsp&mid=WC0b01ac058004d5c1

As a global network of physicians, we urge you to conform to evidence-based medical standards of care by providing women with an effective means of safeguarding their health and, therefore, not to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

ANA CRISTINA GONZALEZ V.

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