

Contraceptive options scarce at Butler

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There is a problem on campus, which can no longer be overlooked: Butler University's birth control services for students are deficient, archaic and ineffective.

A female Butler student wishing to obtain guidance and means of birth control on campus may expect her university health care facility to provide reassuring birth control counsel, numerous contraceptive options or, at the very least, free condoms. However, she will be greatly disappointed when goes to the Butler Health Center and receives an exam from a fumbling doctor who, when asked for advice on forms of birth control, drops a pile of medical pamphlets in her lap and tells her to get the Pill at a pharmacy.

For this sub-par exam, uncompassionate medical literature and directions to the nearest Walgreen's from a facility which her tuition dollars support, a Butler student will pay \$20. On top of that, monthly costs for a prescription of the Pill can be nearly \$50.

At the local Planned Parenthood, this student can receive a thorough exam, sound, sensitive advice about her options for free and three months of birth control pills for \$27.

However, forcing students to turn to off-campus entities for contraceptive options only increases the likelihood of unwanted pregnancy.

Statistics from the Family Care International Web site indicate that one-third of all pregnancies are unwanted. Butler administrators are kidding themselves if they think Butler is immune to this global affliction. I know of at least three unwanted pregnancies here at Butler, and, doubtlessly, there have been more.

Compared with other religiously-unaffiliated colleges and universities, Butler's birth control policies are despairingly inadequate. Philadelphia University has its own family planning program: students are offered counseling, an exam and birth control pills – all free of cost.

Albion College in Michigan offers \$5-packages of the Pill and condoms, 10 for a dollar. At the College of Wooster in Ohio, the Pill is offered at a discount, and condoms are free and plentiful.

The birth control policy for Butler's proposed Wellness Center would allow students access to the Pill only for medical reasons, not as a form of contraception, and some Butler community-members seem to think this system will be adequate for students.

Perhaps these individuals don't understand that this policy

would only make obtaining contraceptives more difficult, completely eliminate any sort of counseling and, in effect, increase the likelihood of unwanted pregnancies on campus.

Perhaps they also don't understand that Butler students do not collectively adhere to one religious dogma, and therefore, should not have their access to legal drugs determined by a conservative health care facility.

If Butler took responsibility for its obligation as a university to make medical services adequate and accessible, students would be able to obtain free or nearly free treatment and contraceptives on campus. As it is, sexually-active students must either buy condoms at the Campus Store's inflated prices or turn outside the university for help.

While a university's sole duty to its students is to be a source of education, not an arsenal of contraceptives, the statistics for unwanted pregnancies are staggering. And perhaps the potentiality for reducing these numbers lies in the hands of educational institutions.

It is imperative that administrators consider this possibility when contracting and staffing the proposed Wellness Center at our religiously-unaffiliated university.

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