

April 12, 2021

Maureen G. Phipps, MD, MPH, FACOG  
Chief Executive Officer  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
c/o Rachel Tetlow, Federal Affairs Director  
[rtetlow@acog.org](mailto:rtetlow@acog.org)

Skye Perryman, General Counsel  
[sperryman@acog.org](mailto:sperryman@acog.org)

William Grobman, MD, MBA  
President  
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine  
[w-grobman@northwestern.edu](mailto:w-grobman@northwestern.edu)

Dear Drs. Phipps and Grobman,

In your letter of April 20, 2020, to former Commissioner Stephen Hahn, you expressed concerns about the in-person dispensing requirements for certain prescription drugs during the current public health emergency. In my letter to you of March 19, 2021, I indicated that staff in the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) were evaluating the issues you raised.

Following up on my March 19, 2021, letter I am writing to report the results of CDER's review and analysis.

CDER conducted a literature search for studies pertinent to the in-person dispensing requirement in the Mifepristone REMS Program during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this literature search, CDER identified four publications that included relevant clinical outcome data.<sup>1</sup> CDER

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<sup>1</sup> Chong E, et al. Expansion of a Direct-to-Patient Telemedicine Abortion Service in the United States and Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Contraception* 2021 (accepted manuscript).

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0010782421000913>; Kerestes C, et al. Provision of medication abortion in Hawai'i during COVID-19: Practical experience with multiple care delivery models. *Contraception* 2021 (accepted manuscript). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2021.03.025>;

Aiken A et al. Effectiveness, Safety and Acceptability of No-test Medical Abortion Provided Via Telemedicine: a National Cohort Study. *British J Obstet Gynecol* 2021. <https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1471-0528.16668>;

Reynolds-Wright JJ et al. Telemedicine medical abortion at home under 12 weeks' gestation: a prospective observational cohort study during the COVID-19 pandemic. *BMJ Sex Reprod Health* 2021. <https://srh.bmj.com/content/early/2021/02/04/bmj.srh-2020-200976>

found that although there are limitations to the study designs, the overall findings from these studies do not appear to show increases in serious safety concerns (such as hemorrhage, ectopic pregnancy, or surgical interventions) occurring with medical abortion as a result of modifying the in-person dispensing requirement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CDER also reviewed postmarketing adverse events that reportedly occurred from January 27, 2020 - January 12, 2021, with mifepristone use for medical termination of early pregnancy, along with available information about deviations or noncompliance events associated with the Mifepristone REMS Program.<sup>2</sup> CDER found that the small number of adverse events reported to FDA during the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) provide no indication that any program deviation or noncompliance with the Mifepristone REMS Program contributed to the reported adverse events.

In summary, provided the other requirements of the Mifepristone REMS Program are met, and given that the in-person dispensing of mifepristone for medical termination of early pregnancy may present additional COVID-related risks to patients and healthcare personnel because it may involve a clinic visit solely for this purpose, CDER intends to exercise enforcement discretion during the COVID-19 PHE with respect to the in-person dispensing requirement of the Mifepristone REMS Program, including any in-person requirements that may be related to the Patient Agreement Form. Further, to the extent all of the other requirements of the Mifepristone REMS Program are met, CDER intends to exercise enforcement discretion during the COVID-19 PHE with respect to the dispensing of mifepristone through the mail either by or under the supervision of a certified prescriber, or through a mail-order pharmacy when such dispensing is done under the supervision of a certified prescriber.

CDER is communicating this decision to the approved application holders subject to the Mifepristone REMS Program.

Sincerely yours,



Janet Woodcock, M.D.  
Acting Commissioner of Food and Drugs

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<sup>2</sup> See Mifepristone REMS Program at <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/remis/index.cfm?event=RemisDetails.page&REMS=390>. CDER's analysis covers both products that are subject to the Mifepristone REMS Program (Mifeprex and the approved generic, Mifepristone Tablets, 200 mg).