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For Immediate Release

“Contraception is Not the Answer” Conference Demonstrates Ultraconservatives' Opposition to Women's Basic Health Care Needs

New York, NY – Today the Pro-Life Action League continues its “War on Contraception” by hosting a national conference entitled “Contraception is Not the Answer” in Chicago, Illinois. Instead of promoting healthy women and healthy families, the Pro-Life Action League is attempting to spread even more misinformation about contraception and to promote policies that limit women’s access to the most basic reproductive health care.

“The agenda of ultraconservatives has expanded beyond opposition to abortion and now includes a direct attack on basic birth control,” said Lois J. Uttley, Director of the MergerWatch Project, an organization that works to protect patients’ rights and access to care. “Their extreme politics are out of touch with the majority of Americans.”

A recent poll for NARAL Pro-Choice of America found that 8 out of 10 registered likely voters are tired of divisive politics around abortion and want real common sense initiatives to prevent abortions and unintended pregnancies. The poll found 61 percent of voters disapprove when they hear Congress has voted 145 times in the last 10 years to restrict reproductive-health services, including abortion and birth control.

According to the Guttmacher Institute, 98% of women aged 15-44 who have ever had sexual intercourse have used at least one contraceptive method and 62% of the 62 million women aged 15-44 are currently using contraception. The Center for Disease Control placed family planning on its list of the 10 Great Public Health Achievements in the 20th Century because contraception has helped to better the health of infants, women and children.

“Organizations such as the Pro-Life Action League are deliberately trying to blur the line between contraception and abortion by inventing such terms as “early abortion” and insisting that contraception can cause an “early abortion,” Uttley said. “The American Medical Association, the American Public Health Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and even the FDA all state that contraception – including emergency contraception – prevents pregnancy, and does not cause an abortion. But these ultraconservatives continue to promote a junk science view of how contraception works.”

In addition to focusing on contraception, the Pro-Life Action League will also use its conference to attack comprehensive sex education. Comprehensive sex education programs, unlike

abstinence-only until marriage programs, include discussion of both abstinence and information about contraceptives and how to prevent sexually transmitted infections. Meanwhile, abstinence-only until marriage programs leave young people without adequate and often inaccurate medical information.

According to the Sexuality Information Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) state evaluations of abstinence-only programs, which have received close to a half billion dollars from the federal government, in Texas, Kansas, Minnesota, Maryland, Pennsylvania found the programs to be ineffective at changing adolescents behaviors and attitudes. For instance, the Minnesota Department of Health found no positive impact of an abstinence-only until marriage program on students' sexual behaviors.

“Ultraconservative moral and religious beliefs are overriding science and medicine in the development of health policy leaving women and young people to face the “collateral damage” of such initiatives.” said Uttley. “It is imperative that we continue to support policies that expand women’s access to health care and vital reproductive health information, not limit it based on politics and extreme religious beliefs.”

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*The MergerWatch Project advocates for patients' rights and access to care.
We believe that the needs and rights of patients must come first in medical decision-
making and in the design of health care delivery systems.
The organization is based in New York City.*