Press Release #1: Plan B story

**National Reporting Project Shines Light on Plan B Access**

**FDA says Plan B Must Be Available OTC—but is it?**

October 8, 2013. The [Reproductive Justice Reporting Project](http://www.altweeklies.com/aan/aan-partners-with-the-media-consortium-on-reproductive-justice-reporting-project/Article?oid=7242201) , a joint effort of the Media Consortium (TMC) and the Association of Alternative Newsmedia (AAN), announces the launch of [Where is Your Plan B?](http://whereisyourplanb.com), an investigation into the availability of this over-the-counter emergency contraceptive.

In June, [the FDA approved Plan B as an over-the-counter drug](http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm358082), making it available to all women of childbearing age without a prescription or point-of-sale restrictions. With a grant from the [Quixote Foundation](http://www.quixotefoundation.org/), ten news outlets from AAN and TMC went out to see how pharmacies were putting this into practice. Those participating included: [Austin Chronicle](http://www.austinchronicle.com/), [Bitch magazine](http://bitchmagazine.org/), [In These Times](http://inthesetimes.com/), [LEO Weekly](http://leoweekly.com/), [Making Contact/ National Radio Project](http://www.radioproject.org/), [Ms. magazine](http://www.msmagazine.com/), [People\*Power\*Media](http://www.peoplepowermedia.net/), [Portland Mercury](http://www.portlandmercury.com/), [Public News Service](http://www.publicnewsservice.org/), and [Santa Fe Reporter](http://www.sfreporter.com).

What these outlets found is that plan B access is not assured. Many reservation pharmacies do not stock plan B or, if they do, ask customers for an ID to obtain the medicine. At stores in Kentucky, plan B was often not on the shelf, but available only by asking a pharmacist. In LA, plan B was technically available, but only in locked cabinets, so that women had to call for assistance to get the package. For students, at a cost of $50 for a single dose, plan B may simply be too expensive to purchase.

What reporters found, in short, is that implementation of this policy is as big a story as the original fight for over the counter plan B. To track that story, the project is calling on consumers to report their individual experiences . The user-submitted data will be used to create a map showing the availability of Plan B across the country.

"This project is a perfect example of what independent and alternative news media do best — use their reporting muscle to shine light on an important topic that affects the lives of real people everyday," said AAN executive director Tiffany Shackelford. "At a time when women's reproductive rights are under attack in so many states, I'm proud that AAN members are part of this effort with the Media Consortium to inform the public and make an impact on the ground-level."