Plan B Puts Ship in the News... Again

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It seems as if old news at Ship is becoming new news once again. Shippensburg University has made its appearance in Cosmopolitan magazine regarding the sale of emergency contraceptive Plan B in a vending machine in Etter Health Center.

In a short interview with Dr. Peter Gigliotti and from reading the statement on Plan B availability on the Shippensburg University website, I was able to gather little more information than I had already known. The contraceptive has been in Etter for over three years as the result of the request from students who took a survey about the services provided at the health center. During my interview with Dr. Gigliotti, it was made clear that the pills had been placed in Etter solely due to the desire from students. He does not know why this is just now becoming big news to the world outside our campus.

It was nice to see Cosmo be on the positive side of the vending machine drama, as opposed to basically every media outlet that covered the story when it first broke out across the country. Frankly, I don’t know why it is becoming a big deal to anyone, on or off campus, now period. I can remember first hearing about Plan B being available during my freshman year. I didn’t even believe it until I saw it my sophomore year.

I was in Etter with a friend who was receiving asthma treatment and I wandered back the hall. Tucked into a room on the end sat the infamous vending machine.

After that day, I can honestly say that I had not heard another word about the machine containing Plan B until Monday, February 6, 2012,when all of the sudden, and seemingly out of the blue, the now notorious vending machine and its contents were plastered all over the web.

So why is it a big deal that here at Ship, we have a vending machine that sells emergency contraception? The dispenser has been here a few years. Everyone at Ship is 17 or older. Plan B has been approved for use in the U.S. since 1982. A story on the CNN website, “Vending machine dispenses emergency contraception,” stated that a survey done by the American College Health Association found that out of 174 schools across the country, 83% of these schools have emergency contraception available for students. Why is Ship the only school known for it?

Condoms are sold in the Cub, so why isn’t there an uproar about that? Condoms catch sperm (if used correctly). Plan B stops ovulation or fertilization of an egg (if used immediately or in the 72 hour time frame). Both stop pregnancy. Plan B does not terminate an existing pregnancy. For clarification, the actual abortion pill is RU-468.

I think that the sale of Plan B here at Ship is in the best interest of the students. Plan B gives women a chance to potentially fix a mistake that could affect them forever. The price is affordable for college students, especially in retrospect of the price of raising a child. To me, the only difference between condoms and Plan B is the simple fact that Plan B does not protect you from STDs. We see condoms sold in machines all over the place, so why is it frowned upon that Plan B is sold in a secluded area of our campus health center?

We are in college. Things happen. Ship Happens... and when plan A goes wrong, a Plan B is needed.

