

CVS, Walgreens to dispense abortion pill in Massachusetts, significant move in reproductive healthcare

In a landmark development for reproductive healthcare access in Massachusetts, leading pharmacy chains CVS and Walgreens have announced plans to begin dispensing the abortion pill, mifepristone, this March. This decision comes amidst ongoing legal debates and reflects a significant step in ensuring accessibility to abortion services following the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

Both CVS and Walgreens have received certification to offer mifepristone, a medication approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for terminating pregnancies up to 10 weeks. This certification allows them to dispense the drug in compliance with federal and state laws, signaling a new phase in the availability of reproductive healthcare services.

Walgreens has indicated that it will initiate the dispensing of mifepristone within a week at selected locations in New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, California, and Illinois. CVS, on the other hand, plans to start offering the pill in Massachusetts and Rhode Island in the coming weeks, with intentions to expand to additional states where legally permissible.

CVS spokesperson Amy Thibault emphasized the pharmacy's commitment to filling prescriptions for mifepristone where it's legally allowed, highlighting the effort to work with manufacturers and suppliers to secure the medication. The

company anticipates a gradual rollout to more states, adhering to legal guidelines.

Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey, has praised the move by CVS and Walgreens. The governor's office released a statement commending the pharmacies for their initiative to expand access to mifepristone, underlining Massachusetts' dedication to safeguarding reproductive care, including medication abortion.

The introduction of mifepristone at pharmacy chains comes at a critical juncture, with the Supreme Court set to hear arguments regarding the drug's access this spring. The Biden Administration is hopeful for a ruling that will overturn previous appellate decisions potentially restricting access to the pill, including limitations on mail delivery. However, spokespeople from CVS and Walgreens have confirmed that their customers will not be able to receive the pill by mail.

This development is particularly significant as abortion pills have become the most common method for terminating pregnancies, especially in the wake of Roe v. Wade's overturn. Mifepristone, used in combination with misoprostol, has been a key component of medication abortion for decades, though its accessibility has faced challenges from legal disputes.

As CVS and Walgreens gear up to offer mifepristone, their actions represent a pivotal moment in the ongoing fight for reproductive healthcare access, reflecting broader efforts to ensure that individuals can make informed decisions about their bodies and futures.