

Advocacy to Improve Access to Contraception through Pharmacist-Initiated Hormonal Contraception in North Carolina

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ESHELMAN SCHOOL OF PHARMACY

BACKGROUND

- In North Carolina (NC), 43% of pregnancies are unintended¹
- Unintended pregnancies negatively impact maternal child outcomes and maternal mortality is increasing¹
- Over 637,000 NC women live in counties that are considered contraception deserts²
- Approximately half of states currently permit pharmacist prescribing of hormonal contraception³
- According to research, 83% of community pharmacists in NC indicate willingness to prescribe hormonal contraception but have concerns about responsibility / liability, time constraints, training, physician resistance, and reimbursement⁴
- Strategic Priority 2 of the BEYOND Strategic Plan for the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy is to accelerate innovation and transformational change in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences

OBJECTIVE

- To advocate for the role of the pharmacist in reproductive health and pass legislation allowing pharmacists to initiate hormonal contraception in NC

METHODS

- North Carolina Association of Pharmacists (NCAP) established a Task Force on Hormonal Contraception to provide recommendations for legislation, training, and implementation of pharmacist-initiated contraception
- Faculty and students advocated for improving access to reproductive healthcare services by engaging with leaders including medical societies, reproductive health stakeholders, and legislators
- Strategies for advocating for the role of the community pharmacist were incorporated into the Doctor of Pharmacy curriculum and co-curriculum
- Legislation was passed to allow pharmacists to initiate hormonal contraception
- Standing orders were signed and contraception training was launched, enabling pharmacist implementation

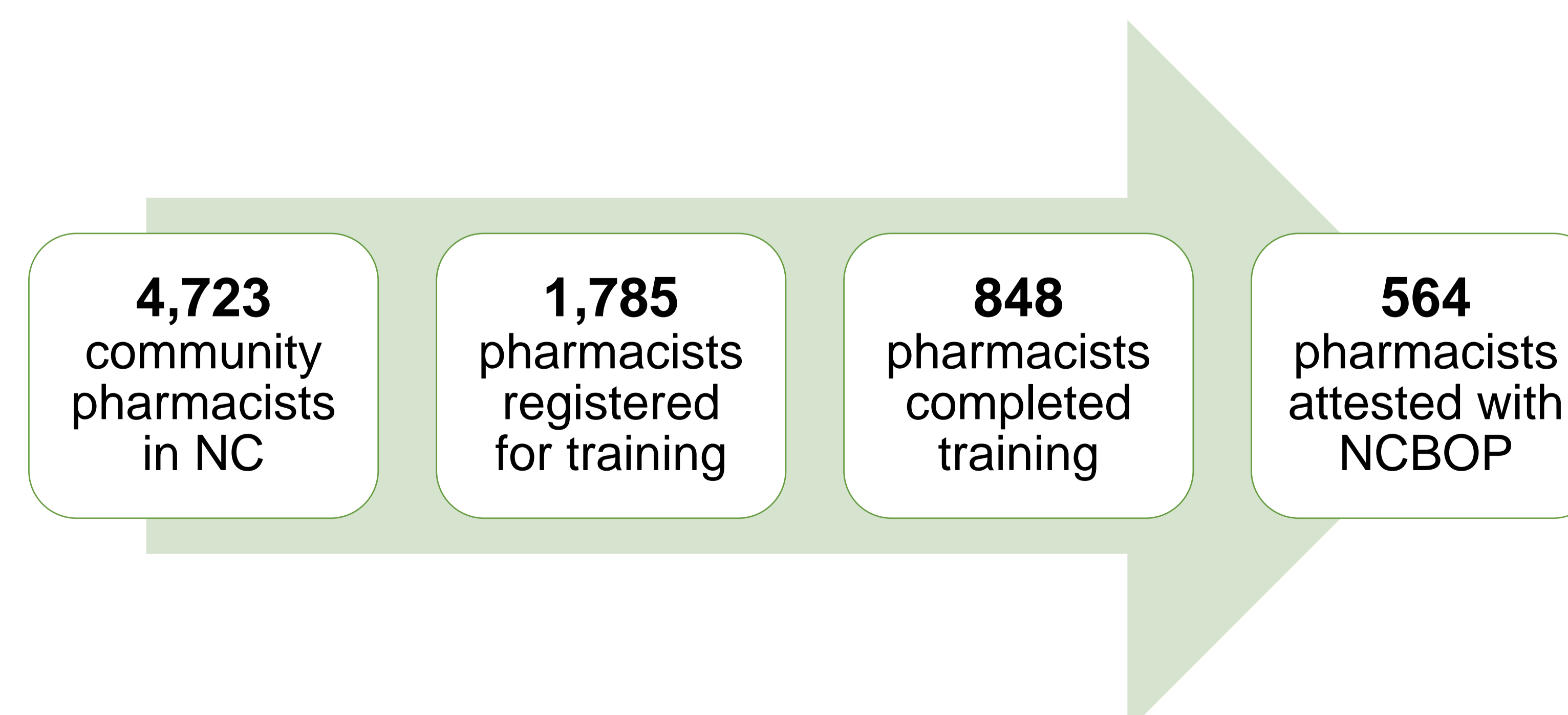
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 2. Power to Decide. Contraception access in North Carolina. www.powertodecide.org
 3. National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations. Pharmacist prescribing: hormonal contraception. www.naspa.us
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RESULTS

HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION ADVOCACY

Timeline	Activity
January 2019	NCAP Task Force on Hormonal Contraception formed
October 2020	Survey of NC pharmacists about willingness to prescribe hormonal contraception published
December 2020	UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy BEYOND Strategic Plan implemented
February 2021	Legislation introduced in state legislature
August 2021	Legislation passed and signed by NC Governor Roy Cooper
August 2021	NC Board of Pharmacy (NCBOP) agrees to pay for 6,000 pharmacists to complete statewide training
March 2022	NCAP develops statewide training modules and Contraception Toolkit
March 2022	Standing orders signed by Betsey Tilson, MD, State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Health and Human Services
October 2022	Contraceptive services development taught in Ambulatory Care Scholars Certificate Program (PY2 students, elective)
October 2022	Completed Student Society of Health-System Pharmacists Advocacy Week
November 2022	Advocacy taught in The Patient Care Experience (PY2 students, required)
January 2023	The Duke Endowment awards \$705,000 to support implementation and evaluation

NC BIRTH CONTROL PHARMACISTS*



*As of March 2023, approximately one year after hormonal contraception legislation signed (data provided by NCAP)

THE DUKE ENDOWMENT GRANT AIMS



CONCLUSIONS

- Collaboration between schools and colleges of pharmacy, state associations, physicians, and reproductive health stakeholders led to successful passage of legislation that allows pharmacists to initiate hormonal contraception
- Stakeholder engagement and coalition building were keys to success
- As of March 2023, 18% of community pharmacists have completed training
- The Duke Endowment grant seeks to accelerate uptake and evaluate the impact of NC pharmacists on patient outcomes

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