I'm Jamie Burch Elliott, lobbyist for Planned Parenthood Advocates of Iowa and Planned Parenthood North Central states. We support HSB 121.

I appreciate this opportunity to work together to increase access to birth control and reduce unintended pregnancies. I look forward to continuing this conversation and I hope we can keep working together on this issue.

We support this bill but I want to bring up a couple of ways to make this a better bill.

1. Blood pressure is a major contraindication for some forms of birth control. While blood pressure is a topic on the health assessment, I encourage lawmakers to also include a blood pressure check during the patient visit. However, I understand that not all pharmacies have access to the equipment needed to do this. I would be remiss if I did not raise this point.
2. Age restrictions. The American College of Ob-Gyns recommends no age limits on pharmacist dispensed birth control and I would agree. In the past, Iowa has seen historically low rates of teen pregnancy. However, since the loss of the Iowa Family Planning Network Waiver and current restrictions on providers of Title X, the federal birth control access program, Iowa's Teen pregnancy rate has increased. I would urge lawmakers to consider allowing patients under 18 to access birth control from pharmacies, or at the very least, consider those that come in with a parent or guardian to access these services.

Birth control is proven to be safe, effective, and easy to use. The health risks related to pregnancy far outweigh any risks related to birth control use.

The loss of the Iowa Family Planning Network Waiver, the failure of Iowa's Family Planning Program, and current restrictions on providers of the Title X family planning program has caused access to birth control in Iowa to decrease, and as a result the unintended pregnancy rate and abortion rate have increased. Iowa continually ranks at the bottom of national lists in per capita access to OB-GYN providers, and our state is losing labor and delivery units at an alarming rate. Iowa is in the midst of a maternal and infant health crisis.

All in all this is a great step to get Iowans the access to birth control they need. Thanks for bringing this bill.