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Effect of Controlled Substance Classification of Misoprostol on Medication Access and Administration in Louisiana

Misoprostol is a widely used medication due to its usage for cervical ripening and uterine atony associated with postpartum hemorrhage. The variety of Misoprostol uses makes it essential for pregnant and non-pregnant patients. Despite the long record of safety and versatility in administration, the Louisiana State Legislature have classified misoprostol as a Schedule IV controlled substance through the passage of Act 246 in October 2024. This study aims to determine the impact of Act 246 on access to misoprostol in Louisiana pharmacies and usage of misoprostol in cases of postpartum hemorrhage.

A phone survey of pharmacies across Louisiana determined that less than half of pharmacies currently have misoprostol in stock and available for dispensing. Of these pharmacies that have misoprostol available eight percent of them have issues filling misoprostol prescriptions since the passage of Act 246. For the pharmacies that do not keep or administer misoprostol 34% of them previously stocked misoprostol prior to October 2024. This preliminary data suggests decreased pharmacy access to misoprostol after Act 246 implementation especially in parishes and areas with previous minimal barriers to care. Additional qualitative analysis will be performed to determine overall pharmacist and pharmacy themes regarding misoprostol administration and the effect of Act 246.

Assessment of misoprostol access and administration is essential to determine the impacts of restrictive legislation on patient outcomes and specifically the field of women's health. Other states continue to attempt to pass legislation similar to Act 246, highlighting the necessity for analysis of birthing individuals' outcomes in outpatient and obstetrical emergencies. This project is imperative to determine adverse outcomes and changes in medication access specifically in maternal care deserts to prevent further restriction and passage of detrimental legislation.