

Evaluation of Sexual and Reproductive Health Products and Services in Wisconsin Community Pharmacies

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Background

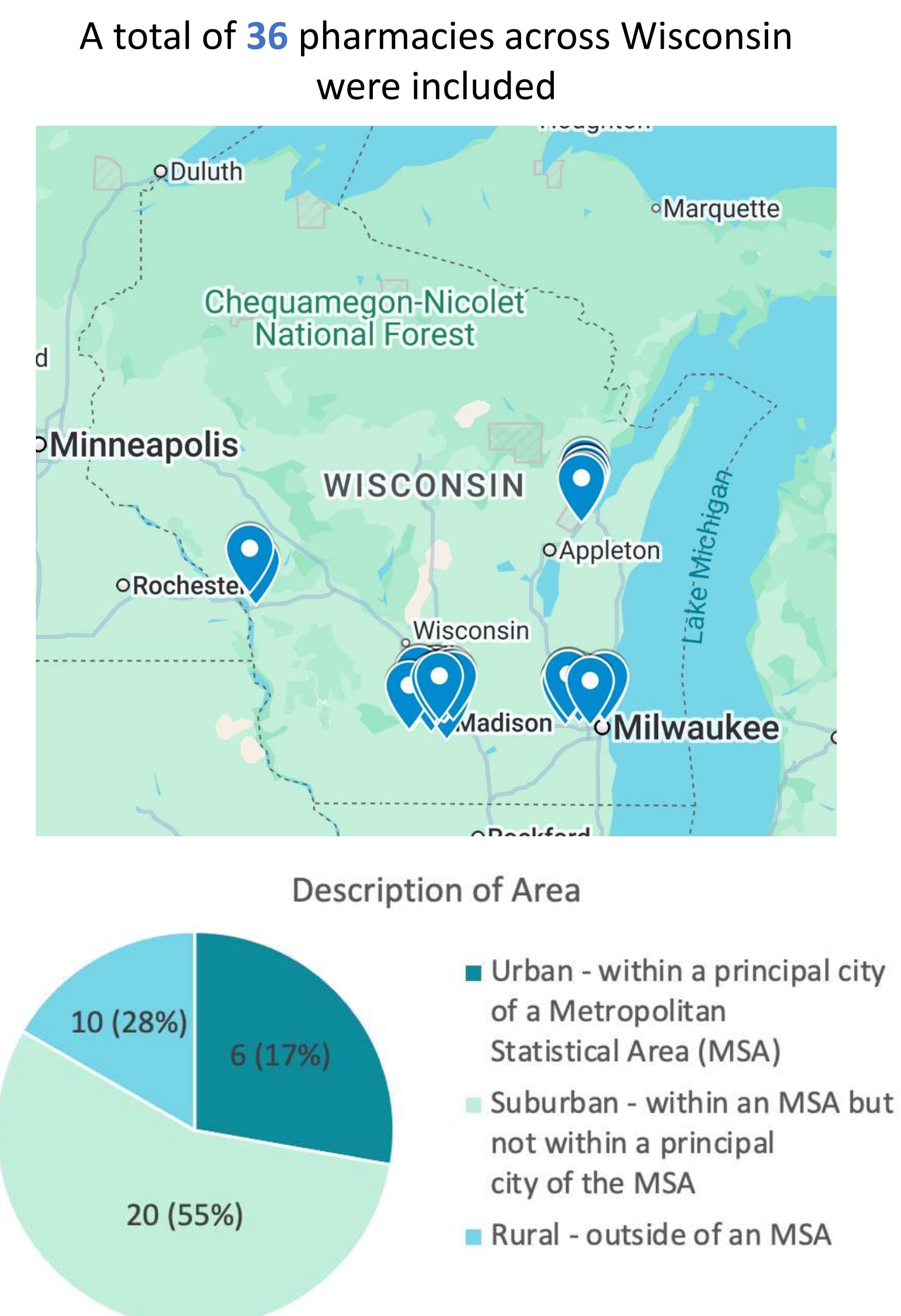
- Consumers face several barriers to accessing high quality sexual and reproductive health (SRH) care^{1,2}
- In community pharmacies, this may include obtaining over-the-counter products and services related to prevention and treatment of STIs
 - Examples: emergency contraception (EC), Opill®, sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening kits, expedited partner therapy (EPT), pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)
- Common barriers to high quality SRH care include:
 - Cost and access (i.e. out of stock, locked behind cabinet, behind the pharmacy counter)
 - Lack of provider/pharmacist knowledge¹
 - Frequent changes in EC restrictions²

Objective

- This project examines the availability and accessibility of SRH products and services across community pharmacies in Wisconsin

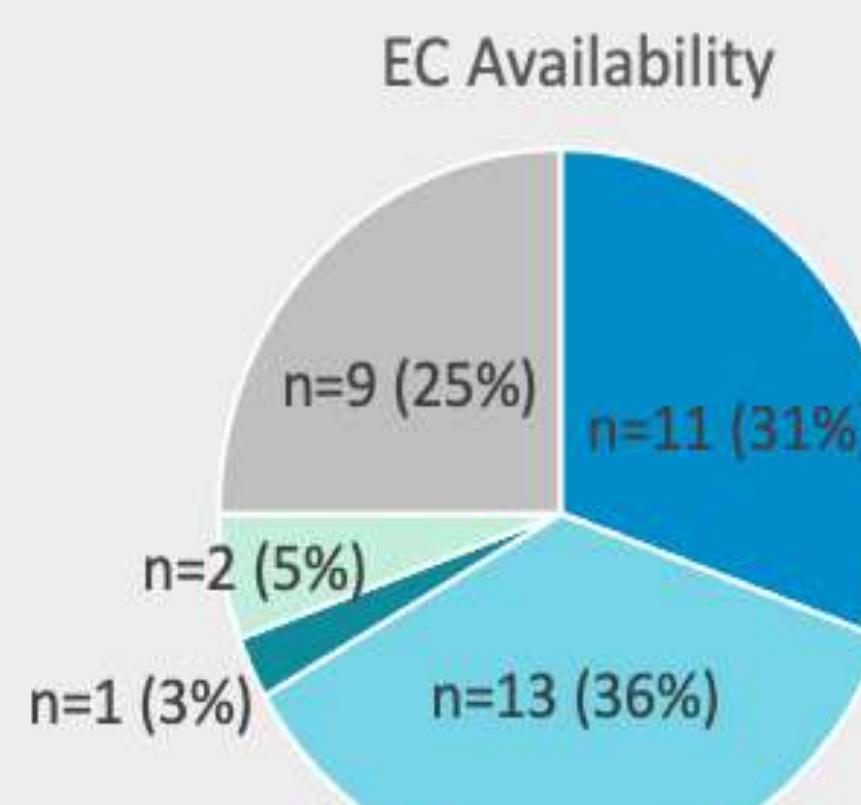
Methods

- Publicly accessible community pharmacies in Wisconsin (including retail, independent, and outpatient) were surveyed in varying geographic areas
- Four third-year PharmD students visited community pharmacies to evaluate (1) product availability, (2) barriers to access, and (3) the inclusivity of SRH services offered at community pharmacies
- To evaluate these items, PharmD students answered a standard list of questions during their visits with some questions answered through observation of the aisles and physical space and others answered through talking with a pharmacist or technician
- The list of questions was developed as part of a larger, national study approved by the Texas Tech University Institutional Review Board
- Pharmacies were visited between December 5, 2024, and February 5, 2025
- Data was recorded using Qualtrics[®] during or following the pharmacy visits and results were analyzed with descriptive statistics

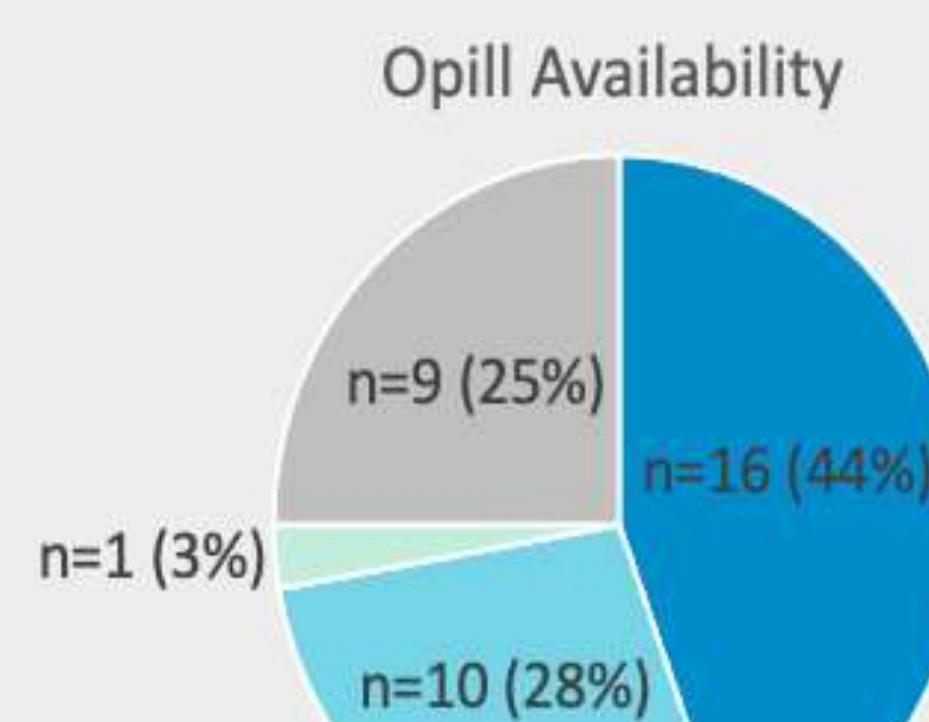


Emergency Contraception & Opill® Availability

Despite being available in 75% of the pharmacies sampled, EC and Opill® were frequently locked up or required staff assistance to purchase



- Yes, the box is directly on the shelf & not locked up in any way
- Yes, in a plastic box that has to be carried to the counter
- Yes, in a locked display case in the aisle
- There is a space on the shelf, but it's currently empty
- No, there is no place for it on the shelf



Outpatient hospital/clinic and independent pharmacies were the least likely to have EC and Opill® available

Results

Pharmacy Type	n (%)
Standalone retail pharmacy	17 (47)
Pharmacy within another store	9 (25)
Pharmacy within a hospital or clinic	4 (11)
Independent pharmacy	5 (14)
Specialty pharmacy	1 (3)

STI Screening Kit Availability

30% (n=11) of pharmacies in the sample had an STI screening kit available

Of the 11 pharmacies that had STI kits available, 9 were standalone retail pharmacies and 2 were pharmacies within another store

Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

Average number of PrEP prescriptions dispensed per month: 3.5 prescriptions/month (median 1, range 0-30)

Expedited Partner Therapy

53% (n=19) of pharmacies reported dispensing EPT prescriptions

Reported Barriers to Dispensing Included:

- Limited exposure to protocol/policies given the infrequency of EPT dispensing
- Insurance/billing
- Limitations of pharmacy software in processing nameless prescription
- Inability to provide patient education to all individuals using medication

Inclusivity and Patient Privacy

50% of pharmacies in the sample had a visible private consultation room

8.3% of pharmacies in the sample had sexual or reproductive resources on display for patients

Discussion

- Access to SRH products and services in Wisconsin varies, with larger gaps in sexual health compared to reproductive health
- Private consultation rooms and public SRH displays may increase patient comfort discussing these topics with pharmacists
- **Next steps:** Develop and share an SRH pharmacy scorecard to help patients and communities identify where to seek services
- **Limitations:** Limited data from middle and northern Wisconsin regions restricts comprehensive understanding of SRH service access across the entire state

References

1. Khorsandi N, Chiccarelli E, Dumas SA, Pasternak RH. Louisiana pharmacies' availability of emergency contraception and counseling accuracy to adolescent and physician callers. *J Pediatr Adolesc Gynecol*. 2021;34(5):693-698. doi:10.1016/j.jpag.2021.02.102
2. Cleland K, Bass J, Doci F, Foster AM. Access to emergency contraception in the over-the-counter era. *Womens Health Issues*. 2016;26(6):622-627. doi:10.1016/j.whi.2016.08.003