



*plan B*<sup>™</sup>  
(LEVONORGESTREL)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NOW THERE IS A PLAN B<sup>™</sup>**

**THE MOST EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE  
NOW AVAILABLE ACROSS CANADA**

**Montreal, Quebec – December 11, 2000 - Plan B<sup>™</sup>**, a new generation emergency contraceptive for Canadian women is now available. **Plan B<sup>™</sup>** is the first progestin-only pill developed to prevent pregnancy after a contraceptive failure. This new prescription product is the most effective emergency contraceptive (EC) available, and boasts a significantly better safety and side effect profile than existing EC's. **Plan B<sup>™</sup>** is distributed and marketed in Canada by Paladin Labs Inc.

**Plan B<sup>™</sup>** was introduced in the United States in 1999 and was approved by Health Canada in February 2000. It received Quebec provincial formulary approval in July 2000, and was listed as an eligible benefit under British Columbia's Pharmacare Program in October 2000. In addition, the Minister of Health in British Columbia authorised pharmacists to dispense emergency contraceptives without a physician's prescription as of December 1, 2000. Also as of December 1, 2000, **Plan B<sup>™</sup>** is covered by Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits Program which reimburses drugs for registered First Nations and recognized Innu and Inuit Peoples.

"Over 60% of Canadian women between the ages of 15 and 49 use some form of contraception. It is estimated that in over 10% of these cases, a contraceptive failure occurs such as a defective condom, a condom that slips off or breaks or a diaphragm that gets dislodged. For such instances, as well as in the event of a sexual assault, Canadian women who have chosen to use contraceptives now have access to **Plan B<sup>™</sup>**, a safe and effective backup. We continue to emphasise the importance for women to maintain their regular method of contraception", commented Dr. Katia Betito, Executive Director, Scientific Affairs at Paladin Labs Inc.

The small, discreet **Plan B<sup>™</sup>** package (about the size of a woman's compact) consists of two 0.75 mg tablets of levonorgestrel, a synthetic derivative of the hormone progesterone. It is one of the two active compounds commonly used in combined oral contraceptive pills. The first **Plan B<sup>™</sup>** tablet must be taken within 72 hours of a contraceptive failure; the second tablet is taken 12 hours later.

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The **Plan B™** regimen was tested by the World Health Organization (WHO) in almost 2,000 women in 14 countries, including the United States and Canada. The results of the study, published in the *Lancet* (August 8, 1998) stated that the use of levonorgestrel alone for emergency contraception is more effective and much better tolerated than the Yuzpe regimen which involves two high doses of oral contraceptives containing both estrogen and progestin. Nausea occurs in only 23.1% of women taking **Plan B™** compared to 50.5% with the Yuzpe regimen, a reduction of over 50%. Vomiting occurs in only 5.6% of women taking **Plan B™** compared to 18.8% with the Yuzpe regimen, a reduction of over 70%. In addition, **Plan B™** has been added to The WHO Model List of Essential Drugs.

**Plan B™** will not terminate an existing pregnancy and is not effective if a woman is already pregnant. **Plan B™** is believed to act as an emergency contraceptive principally by preventing ovulation, inhibiting fertilization, or preventing implantation. The product will not protect against sexually transmitted diseases.

“We are very proud to be able to provide this important advance in emergency contraception. The widespread support of emergency contraception by such organizations as The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), Canadian Pharmacists Association, Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada, as well as the listing of **Plan B™** on Quebec and British Columbia’s provincial formularies, is also very encouraging”, commented Mark Beaudet, Vice President of Paladin. “Canadian women who choose to use an emergency contraceptive will now have access to a safer product with an optimum side-effect profile over currently available products.”

**Plan B™** was licensed from Women’s Capital Corporation (WCC), a privately held U.S. company dedicated to the development of critically needed reproductive health products for women.

“I believe the new progestin-only emergency contraceptive will continue to be readily accepted by health care providers,” said Dr. Edith Guilbert, a leading Canadian physician who took part in the WHO study. Dr. Guilbert is Chief of Staff of the Family Planning Clinic of the CHUQ and also serves as a medical counsellor for the Direction of Public Health of Québec. “**Plan B™** is much easier to administer and use than the older regimens. A new and better product will also help increase awareness of emergency contraception and this should help reduce the high rates of unintended pregnancy in Canada,” commented Dr. Guilbert.

Paladin Labs Inc. is a public company whose shares trade on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol *PLB*. Headquartered in Montréal, Québec, the Canadian company develops, markets and distributes innovative pharmaceuticals with products in such therapeutic categories as urology, dermatology, and other specialty markets.

- 30 -

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