



## Family Planning & Birth Control Survey Key Findings

The following *Our Moment of Truth™* survey findings were fielded by GMI Research, Inc. in August 2013. The survey was completed by more than 1200 women between the ages of 18 and 45, of a variety of cultural backgrounds, and from across the United States.

- 1. Women report that they do not feel very knowledgeable about the different types of available birth control.**
  - After abstinence (70%), only a little more than half of the women said they were very knowledgeable about condoms (55%) and less than half of the women said they were very knowledgeable about birth control pills (49%), the withdrawal method (43%), and tubal ligation (28%).
  - Only 17% percent of women said they were very knowledgeable about birth control implants, and 21% of women said they were very knowledgeable about intrauterine devices (IUDs), both of which are recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as the most effective form of birth control, with fewer than 1 in 100 pregnancies occurring in women who use an implant or IUDs.
- 2. Many health care providers are not properly informing women how to correctly use their method of birth control.**
  - Forty percent of women surveyed said they did not receive in-depth counsel or information from their health provider on how to use the type of birth control they were prescribed.
- 3. Many women are not having positive experiences when discussing birth control and family planning with their health care provider.**
  - Although 64% of women shared they were presented with multiple birth control options by their health provider, 1 in 10 said they felt pressured to choose one type over another.
  - One in 10 women also stated there were questions they did not feel they were able to ask their health provider.
  - An additional 1 in 10 women said they felt their health provider made assumptions about them that led them to prescribe a certain type of birth control.
- 4. Women have harmful misperceptions about which types of birth control are most effective.**
  - Birth control pills were ranked by 57% of respondents as the most effective form of birth control, followed by vasectomy (49%), tubal ligation (46%), and condoms (male or female, 43%).
  - While vasectomy and tubal ligation are extremely effective in preventing pregnancy (fewer than 1% of women who had undergone tubal ligation or were having intercourse with partners who had undergone vasectomy experienced an unintended pregnancy, according to the CDC), **18-21% of women who relied on male or female condoms became pregnant.**
  - Women ranked IUDs as the fifth-most effective form of birth control, with only 20% of respondents correctly stating that they are most effective for preventing pregnancy.
  - Only 13% of women ranked birth control implants as most effective.

## Family Planning & Birth Control Survey Key Findings

- Seventy-four percent of women ranked abstinence as the most effective method for preventing pregnancy.
- 5. Many women are not using the forms of birth control that are most effective for preventing unplanned pregnancy.**
- The top methods of birth control women reported using were birth control pills (27%), male or female condoms (20%), and withdrawal (13%).
  - Thirteen percent of women are currently using the withdrawal method as their birth control method, despite CDC findings that 22% of women using this method experienced an unintended pregnancy.
  - While birth control pills can be a convenient, highly effective method of preventing pregnancy, oftentimes women may forget to take their pill, creating an inconsistency in adherence that can lead to unplanned pregnancies.
  - While condoms are highly effective at preventing sexually transmitted infections, the CDC reports that they have an 18-21% failure rate in preventing pregnancy.
  - Only 2% of women are using birth control implants, and 6% of women are using IUDs, the most effective forms of birth control according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- 6. Midwives are uniquely positioned to address the knowledge and service gap in birth control and family planning for US women.**
- Thirty-seven percent of women sought counsel from a health provider when they decided to switch or discontinue use of their birth control method, and an additional 22% discussed this decision with their partner. **Nineteen percent did not consult anyone.**
  - Only 26% of women knew that a certified nurse-midwife (CNM) or certified midwife (CM) offers family planning and contraceptive services, despite this being a specialty for the profession. Fewer than 5% of women consulted a CNM or CM when making a decision on which type of birth control was best for them.
  - While there are a full range of health care providers who offer birth control and family planning services, midwives are a particularly underutilized resource. Midwives serve as partners in their clients' health care, and provide personalized services tailored to each woman's unique needs—a style of care that is especially suited to assist women in making important birth control and family planning decisions.
- 7. The data on birth control and family planning are timely and particularly useful as providers and women learn more about the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA).**
- The ACA improves coverage and expands services for women in the area of sexual and reproductive health.
  - More women will have access to these services.
  - Because midwives are well-trained and skilled at providing these services, ACA implementation is a great opportunity for more women to seek midwife-led care.