



Transcript from *Contraception 101: More than Just Pills and Condoms*  
Capitol Hill Briefing | December 10, 2008

### **Part 1: Overview**

Sarah Brown [CEO, *The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy*]: Now as many of you are aware unless you've been under a rock this last year, there's been a real media frenzy on particularly teen pregnancy. Uh, it's been a wonderful, national conversation in many ways. You know it sort of started with the release of the movie, "Juno" and "Knocked Up." And then it's just gone on and on. We've had the Gloucester teens. We had the CDC and now it's about a year ago with three percent rise in the teen birthrate. But uh, the discussion really has been isolated to teens and I think that is due in part to the simple fact that most Americans do not realize that it's not just teens who have challenges and difficulty with pregnancy planning and prevention. In fact, half of all pregnancies in the U.S. at present are unplanned and the majority of these are to adults; not to teens. It's a big problem. Now just to review the basic biology here there are only two ways to avoid or reduce an unplanned pregnancy or teen pregnancies for that matter: less sex or no sex or better use of family planning among those who are sexually active. And it's the second focus contraception that's our uh, emphasis today. Now please understand that this is not to in any way suggest that responsible behavior, values, faith and other things aren't important and don't shape this

area and for those of you who may know The National Campaign—we've worked a lot on these issues and will continue to do. But again our focus today is on methods of family planning which surely play a role in reducing unplanned pregnancy and teen pregnancy and, of course, therefore, abortion, especially for young adults where we know that by age thirty over ninety percent report that they have had sex. There is a lot of room for and need for improvement. Recent data, the most recent from the National Survey of Family Growth, show that less than half of women who experience an unplanned pregnancy were using any contraceptive method in the month they became pregnant and the other half may have been using something, but they weren't using it properly or they weren't using it carefully enough or consistently. And, of course, surrounding all of this is this decade's long argument about abortion, which I think personally has dominated our discussions in this sort of area at the expense of understanding and supporting simple old-fashioned family planning. I mean these issues are primary prevention versus what is done after pregnancy is in place and the options and so forth has gotten all muddled up and I think again to the detriment of family planning. I mean in particular many people don't know that family planning is widely used and supported. Ninety-eight percent of sexually experienced women in this country have used at least one family planning method at some point and fully eighty-eight percent or more of voters say that they support women's access to contraception. So we understand this can be a sensitive topic and involves a lot of issues of faith and so forth, personal opinion, experience, but we also think it's very important that you all have some access to these experts here who have a lot of very good evidence-based objective information about this field.