

## **Christian Medical & Dental Associations Scientific Statement** *Possible Post-conceptual Effects of Hormonal Birth Control*

Christian Medical & Dental Associations (CMDA) holds firmly that God is the Creator of life, that life begins at conception, and that all human life is of infinite value. We support measures to protect life from its earliest beginnings.

CMDA recognizes that there are differing viewpoints among Christians regarding the broad issue of birth control and the use of contraceptives. The issue at hand, however, is whether or not hormonal birth control methods have post-conceptual effects (i.e., cause abortion). CMDA has consulted many experts in the field of reproduction who have reviewed the scientific literature. While there are data that cause concern, our current scientific knowledge does not establish a definitive causal link between the routine use of hormonal birth control and abortion. However, neither are there data to deny a post-conceptual effect.

Because this issue cannot be resolved with our current understanding, CMDA calls upon researchers to further investigate the mechanisms of action of hormonal birth control. Additionally, because the possibility of abortive effects cannot be ruled out, prescribers of hormonal birth control should consider informing patients of this potential factor.

We recognize the difficulties of providing informed consent while handicapped by lack of definitive information. However, counseling of patients may simply involve asking if they have concerns about potential post-conceptual effects of these methods of birth control. In cases where concern exists, an explanation may follow that includes the known mechanisms of action (e.g., inhibition of ovulation and decreased sperm penetration), as well as the concern about the unanswered question of whether hormones negatively effect the very early stages of life.

CMDA respects and defends the right of our colleagues to refuse to prescribe hormonal birth control when they do so with the concern of a post-conceptual effect.

We recognize that scientific reasoning is not the only factor that influences opinions about the use of hormonal birth control. But, while additional investigation is needed, current knowledge does not confirm or refute conclusions that routine use of hormonal birth control causes abortion. CMDA will continue to monitor new developments.

*Approved by the Board of Trustees*  
*September 1998*