Written by **Raven Clabough** on October 2, 2019

School Improperly Implants Birth Control Device in Teen Without Parental Consent

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ABC News reports a that Baltimore mother was infuriated to learn her daughter received a birth control implant at school without the school obtaining parental consent, and the implant was placed improperly, causing physical ailments to the teen and potentially putting her life at risk.

Nicole Lambert reportedly took her 16-year-old daughter to the pediatrician after her daughter complained of headaches and arm pain. Upon examination, the pediatrician determined the teen's ailments were caused by an improperly placed three-year contraceptive, Nexplanon, which had traveled to the back of her arm from the inside of her upper arm.

The pediatrician informed Lambert that the contraceptive would have to be removed to avoid more serious complications such as blood clots.

"I instantly started crying because just to hear that your child, anything could happen to your child and you didn't even know what's going on, it's a scary feeling," Lambert said.

Lambert reports that she was never made aware that the school had administered the birth control implant and states that the school did not obtain her permission. When she confronted the school and made a scene, school staff asked her to leave.

"I actually went to the school. I was furious. I was mad, so I went to the school and the nurse told me, 'I don't have to talk to you about absolutely nothing.' I'm like that is my child, I take care of this child, you can talk to me about my child, and they put me out of the school," said Lambert.

Unfortunately for Lambert, state law permits minors to receive contraception services without parental consent.

According to Consumer Affairs, the city of Baltimore has been "progressive" on the subject of adolescent reproductive health and teen pregnancy and has distributed various forms of birth control to students without parental consent for more than 50 years, despite the controversy.

WMAR reports several of Baltimore City's 17 School-Based Health Centers (SBHC) provide reproductive services to students, five of which are operated by the Baltimore City Health Department and eight of which are operated by the Baltimore Medical System. These centers administer a variety of birth control, including oral pills, Plan B, Depo-Provera, NuvaRing, and Nexplanon.

The policy has had detractors such as former Baltimore City Councilman Carl Stokes, a Democrat. "They need parental permission to take children to the zoo, but they can surgically implant such a thing into a child's arm. I don't think so. It's social engineering at its worst," he said.

Other critics have raised concerns that the policy has been used to target minority students. "Why do you target African-American girls? Why not other communities? I think the answer is racism," argued

Reverend Gregory B. Perkins of St. Paul Community Baptist Church. "We live in a promiscuous society. The challenges for a young person in terms of sexual activity is the same in Baltimore City as it is in Montgomery County."

Last year, Montgomery County High Schools did begin providing free condoms to its students following a unanimous school board vote to combat the increase in sexually transmitted diseases.

It's worth noting that school districts in areas of Maryland with largely white populations, such as Anne Arundel County, Harford County, greater Baltimore County, and Howard County, do not distribute birth control in schools.

The history of family planning supports Reverend Perkins' assertions of racism, as Planned Parenthood's founder Margaret Sanger was a eugenicist who viewed African Americans as a scourge on society and hoped to use abortion and contraception as tools to decrease the black population.

Lambert's incident has raised concerns over the qualifications of staff who administer birth control to students. WMAR's Mallory Sofastaii contacted the school system for information pertaining to nurse's training, qualifications, and birth control policies, but was redirected to the Baltimore City Health Department, which stated it cannot respond to questions on this subject because of a pending case against the city.

The company behind the Nexplanon, Merck, did admit that there have not been any safety studies on women under the age of 18. But the spokesperson told WMAR the company expects the safety and efficacy to be the same as for adults.

Lambert states she is uncomfortable with nurses in school performing a procedure as invasive as a birth control implant on her child without parental consent. She hired an attorney to investigate the matter further, WMAR reports.

"Ms. Lambert wasn't given the choice to pick the medical provider where her daughter would feel comfortable going and receiving these services, who she knew did a comprehensive medical exam, who she knew knew her medical history," said Lambert's attorney, David Ledyard.

Lambert has also raised concerns that there are other parents who may be unaware their children were implanted with this birth control, especially when there is a possibility that an improper implantation can pose serious medical risks. "Other kids out here could be going through the same thing and their parents don't know about it. And I just think these kids, if they have it incorrectly or whatever it is, they should be checked because anything could happen to these kids," said Lambert.

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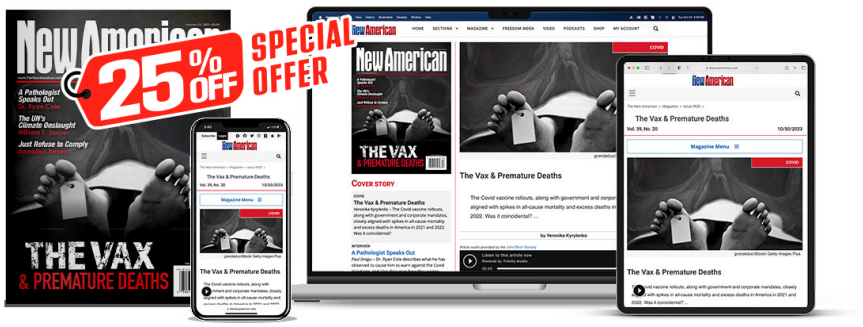

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