

80% of Brazilians Favor Free Morning-After Pills

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Brazilians approve the government's family planning policy, launched by the Ministry of Health in March of this year. This is shown in a study conducted by the Ministry between June 18 and 19 in 25 states.

Of the more than 2,000 people who responded to the questionnaire, 91% approved the increase in contraceptive devices offered by the public health system, and 77% agree with the free distribution of emergency contraception pills, known as morning-after pills.

"As a result of the survey, the Ministry discovered that the population supports the free distribution of contraceptives and the 'morning-after pill' in health posts and by the Family Health program.

But the study also showed that most Brazilians don't know how to prevent pregnancies, because they lack information about the methods," says the Minister of Health, Humberto Costa. To combat this problem, the Ministry will devote more publicity to the topic.

The increase in the distribution of contraceptive devices will quadruple the cost, in comparison with previous years. According to the Minister, US\$ 17 million (40 million reais) will be spent to take care of 40 million people.

There are also plans to increase condom distribution in public schools to adolescents 13 years or older. This is already being done in some secondary schools around the country. 74% regard this step as positive.

This month 3,844 municipalities have already begun to receive the contraceptives, such as condoms and pills. As a result, 5,232 cities are supplied with the devices available through the public health system.

The National Sexual and Reproductive Rights Policy provides for family planning measures during the period 2005-2007. The policy is intended to guarantee the sexual and reproductive health rights of the population.

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