DC Is First U.S. City to Distribute Free Female Condoms

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In the next month, Washington, DC, will become the first U.S. city to hand out free female condoms, distributing 500,000 of the prophylactics in beauty salons, convenience stores and high schools in sections of the city with high HIV rates, *The Washington Post* reports. The program is funded through a $500,000 grant from the M·A·C AIDS Fund, which also supports the city's needle exchange programs.

"Anywhere male condoms are available, female condoms will be available," said Shannon Hader, director of DC's HIV/AIDS Administration. "We're trying to make every effort count, to build on what already exists...to expand options rather than limit them."

Female condom distribution could begin within the next three weeks to communities in wards 1, 2, 3, 6 and 7, where a study showed many African-American heterosexuals engage in risky sexual behavior that may lead to the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

A report released last summer showed that at least 3 percent of DC's population is living with HIV/AIDS.

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