

Mary is a pharmacy student doing her clinical rotations in her fourth year of school. She's from a small, rural town and wants to return home to take care of her elderly mother while practicing pharmacy at the town's only pharmacy, a national chain known as WM Pharmacies, Inc. (WMPI) For this reason she has chosen to do a rotation at a WMPI store near campus starting next month. Mary is currently certified in emergency contraception (EC) and wants to provide immediate EC access for patients when she moves back to her home town.

When Mary called the local WMPI preceptor to let him know that she would be doing a rotation in his store next month and that while there that she'd like to provide EC under a collaborative agreement protocol - she heard some disturbing news. WMPI does not stock EC at any of its stores due to a decision by WMPI administration that there was not enough demand for EC to justify stocking it. When the preceptor was asked if EC could be ordered upon the receipt of a prescription, he indicated that it could not.

Mary was disappointed and puzzled. At her current clinical rotation, just a few miles away this WMPI rotation site, EC was prescribed daily by pharmacists and the pharmacy received many inquiries about EC from patients and frequently filled prescriptions for EC from local providers. Concerned that her WMPI preceptor was just personally opposed to EC, she emailed the WMPI national pharmacy director to tell him about the high demand and need for EC and about how she had hoped to work for WMPI in her home town in the near future. The director called her the next day and said that he would love to have her work for WMPI as they needed pharmacists at her home town WMPI store. He told her about the WMPI advanced practice mission and offered her a signing bonus if she chose to work for WMPI. Upon questioning he said that EC could not be stocked in any of their pharmacies but that it could be ordered if someone brought in a prescription. He'd love to have her work for his WMPI company after graduation.

Questions:

1. Why would the local WMPI preceptor say that he could not order EC and yet the national director told Mary she could order it upon demand?
2. Do you think the national decision to not stock EC was a business decision?
3. Do you think WMPI pharmacies are failing to accommodate patient needs by not stocking EC?
4. Do you think Mary should work for a WMPI store when she graduates?