

Access to abortion pill at CVS praised

But opponents fear store availability will ‘normalize’ procedure

By Angie Leventis Lourgos
Chicago Tribune

As the drugstore chains Walgreens and CVS Health plan to begin dispensing the controversial abortion pill mifepristone, Illinois reproductive rights advocates praise the new means of access to the medication — which they say will improve health equity as well as help destigmatize abortion.

Abortion opponents, however, have decried the move, fearing the distribution of the popular abortion medication at well-known retailers will normalize terminating a pregnancy.

Dr. Amy Whitaker, chief medical officer at Planned Parenthood of Illinois, said the availability of abortion pills at drugstores with a prescription will “let people get the care they need in the way that works best for them.”

“We believe medication abortion pills should be treated like any other prescription,” she added. “Abortion care should be treated like any other health care. Making medication abortion pills available in pharmacies moves in the right direction toward making abortion care considered and treated like the basic health care that it is.”

Yet Eric Scheidler, executive director of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, said it’s “horribly disappointing” that patrons will be able to “just walk into your neighborhood pharmacy and procure an abortion pill.”

“I’m distraught about it,” he said. “They’re trying to normalize the abortion pill in way that it just isn’t normalized if you can only get them from Planned Parenthood or other abortion providers directly.”

Walgreens and CVS recently announced their intent to distribute the abortion drug by prescription in states where the medication is legal, after the two drugstore chains were certified to dispense the drug by the Food and Drug Administration.

President Joe Biden called the decision “a milestone” in enabling access to the abortion medication and encouraged all pharmacies to follow suit.

“With major retail pharmacy chains newly certified to dispense medication abortion, many women will soon have the option to pick up their prescription at a local, certified pharmacy — just as they would for any other medication,” he said in a statement last week.

The move comes as the U.S. Supreme Court weighs a challenge

Turn to Mifepristone, Page 2

Area man accused in Jan. 6 attack

A south suburban man is charged with breaching a police line during the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol in Washington and firing a gun. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

Riding post-speech momentum

Fresh off his State of the Union speech, President Joe Biden travels to campaign events in Pennsylvania and Georgia, two key battleground states. **Nation & World**

What’s spurring Loyola’s turnaround?

Coach Drew Valentine breaks down Loyola’s turnaround basketball season in advance of their regular-season finale against LaSalle on Saturday afternoon. **Chicago Sports**



Franmaris Luna, 9, of Venezuela, cries on the arm of her mother, Tibisay Luna, while waiting for a bus with her sister, Frayeli, 11, outside a migrant shelter on Chicago's Lower West Side on Friday. Franmaris was afraid of contracting measles after a child staying at the shelter developed a confirmed case that Chicago public health officials announced Friday. **ARMANDO L. SANCHEZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Measles case confirmed at city’s largest migrant shelter

Families advised to remain in place; incident second case reported this week

By Nell Salzman
Chicago Tribune

A child staying at a migrant shelter on the Lower West Side developed a confirmed case of measles, Chicago public health officials announced Friday. It was the second case of measles reported in the city this week.

Officials said the child has recovered and is no longer infectious. The city of Chicago

is responding with a “host of resources,” a city spokesperson said in a statement Friday morning.

“Those who have been vaccinated can go about their normal business while those who have not been vaccinated will have to remain indoors to watch for symptoms,” the statement said.

Chicago Public Schools issued a statement that said the child was not a CPS student. All fami-

lies residing at the shelter were advised to remain in place and school-aged children were told to not attend school Friday, according to CPS.

The site of the newly confirmed case is the most crowded shelter in the city’s web of 23 buildings currently housing over 11,600 migrants, thousands who have arrived on buses sent by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott — many of them fleeing a failed economy and health infrastructure in Venezuela.

It is a large warehouse that has received skepticism from health

advocates and volunteers helping migrants after a 5-year-old staying there died in December.

Migrants outside the shelter Friday said they’d been told by shelter staff about the measles case at around 12:30 a.m. They were told to quarantine for 10 days, but migrants said they’d received mixed messages about what that meant. They weren’t sure if they could go to work or school.

The news and confusion led to several fights breaking out in the

Turn to Measles, Page 4



3M’s Cordova chemical plant on the Mississippi River upstream from the Quad Cities in 2022. The company said it will stop making PFAS chemicals in 2025. **E. JASON WAMBSGANS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Illinois moves to limit toxic forever chemicals in wells

State regulations aiming to protect millions from PFAS

By Michael Hawthorne
Chicago Tribune

Illinois is moving to join 10 other states that limit toxic forever chemicals in underground sources of water.

Regulations unveiled Wednesday by the Illinois

Pollution Control Board are intended to protect millions of people from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances or PFAS, some of which build up in human blood, cause cancer and other diseases and take years to leave the body.

Nearly 300,000 Illinoisans rely on utilities where PFAS in well water exceed the state’s proposed standards, according to a Chicago Tribune analysis of testing conducted between

2020 and 2022. Chicago-area communities with contaminated wells include Fox Lake, Lake In The Hills, Marengo, Rockdale, South Elgin and Sugar Grove.

It is unknown how many of the 1.4 million people in the state who depend on private wells are drinking PFAS-contaminated water. The Tribune reported last year that state

Turn to Chemicals, Page 4

ELECTION 2024

RNC votes to install Trump allies

Daughter-in-law of ex-president joins leadership team

By Steve Peoples and Michelle L. Price
Associated Press

HOUSTON — The Republican National Committee voted Friday to install Donald Trump’s hand-picked leadership team, completing his takeover of the national party as the former president closes in on a third straight presidential nomination.

Michael Whatley, a North Carolina Republican who has echoed Trump’s false theories of voter fraud, was elected the party’s new national chairman in a vote Friday morning in Houston. Lara Trump, the former president’s daughter-in-law, was voted in as co-chair.

Trump’s team is promising not to use the RNC to pay his mounting personal legal bills. But Trump and his lieutenants will have firm control of the party’s political and fundraising machinery with limited, if any, internal pushback.

“The RNC is going to be the vanguard of a movement that will work tirelessly every single day to elect our nominee, Donald J. Trump, as the 47th President of the United States,” Whatley told RNC members in a speech after being elected.

Whatley will carry the top

Turn to RNC, Page 6