



July 08, 2009

OCs OTC Working Group: Meeting Sept 21-22 in NYC and other updates

Dear OCs OTC Working Group member,

Below are detailed updates about each of the following:

1. **OCs OTC Working Group meeting** in New York City, September 21-22
2. **OCs OTC identified as priority topic** for comparative effectiveness research by the **Institute of Medicine**
3. Presentations of interest at **Reproductive Health 2009**, the annual meeting of the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals and the Society of Family Planning, Los Angeles, September 30-October 3
4. Presentations of interest at the annual meeting of the **American Public Health Association**, Philadelphia, November 7-11

OCs OTC Working Group meeting

The next working group meeting is scheduled for September 21-22 at the Guttmacher Institute in New York. Below is a list of some of the topics that will be discussed at the meeting:

- History of the OCs OTC working group and update on activities
- How could OCs go OTC? An overview of the regulatory issues
- Preliminary findings of the working group's stakeholder analysis related to an OTC switch for OCs
- New research findings and pilot projects related to OTC provision of OCs
- The economics of OTC provision of OCs, including presentations on new research on women's out-of-pocket costs for OCs, an update on Medicaid and insurance coverage for Plan B since going OTC (and the relevant lessons learned for a possible switch for OCs), and an update on where things stand with health care reform and coverage for contraceptives
- Smaller group work focused on the working group's research and communication activities
- A facilitated discussion of next steps for the working group

Space will be limited for the meeting, so please let Dan know if you are interested in coming. We are also holding a small number of rooms at a nearby hotel at a reduced rate—please let us know if you would be interested in one of these. We plan to send out a more detailed agenda in early August.

OCs OTC identified as priority topic for comparative effectiveness research by the Institute of Medicine

On June 30, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a set of recommendations to Congress and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) for how to prioritize federal efforts on **comparative effectiveness research** (CER), centered on a list of 100 high-priority research areas that includes two reproductive health priorities ranked within its top quartile:



- **Compare the effectiveness of innovative strategies for preventing unintended pregnancies (e.g., over-the-counter access to oral contraceptives or other hormonal methods, expanding access to long-acting methods for young women, providing free contraceptive methods at public clinics, pharmacies, or other locations).**
- Compare the effectiveness of clinical interventions (e.g., prenatal care, nutritional counseling, smoking cessation, substance abuse treatment, and combinations of these interventions) to reduce incidences of infant mortality, pre-term births, and low birth weight, especially among African American women.

The report was mandated by Congress as part of \$1.1 billion in new funding for CER contained within the stimulus legislation passed in February. CER—defined by the IOM as “the generation and synthesis of evidence that compares the benefits and harms of alternative methods to prevent, diagnose, treat, and monitor a clinical condition or to improve the delivery of care”—has become a central and contentious issue in the health reform debate. Proponents see it as crucial to informed decision-making by patients, health care providers, insurers and policymakers, to improving health care and outcomes and to decreasing the use of ineffective treatments. Opponents argue that it will focus heavily on the cost-effectiveness of interventions, ignore the needs of individual patients and lead to rationing of care by government agencies. The recommendations of the IOM committee were developed after a public input process that included 20,000 emails to stakeholders inviting their input, an open meeting in March and a web-based questionnaire, through which several thousand topics were nominated. The full committee report can be found here, along with links to a PDF summary: http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12648 or at <http://www.iom.edu/CMS/3809/63608/71025/71107.aspx>.

Presentations of interest at Reproductive Health 2009, the annual meeting of ARHP and SFP, Los Angeles, Sept 30-Oct 3

Dan Grossman and Kelly Blanchard will lead a Lunch-and-Learn session entitled “The Case for Moving Oral Contraceptives Over-The-Counter” on Thursday, October 1, from 12:30 to 2:00 pm. If you will be attending the meeting and are interested in participating in this session, please let Dan know.

This paper is one of the oral abstract presentations:

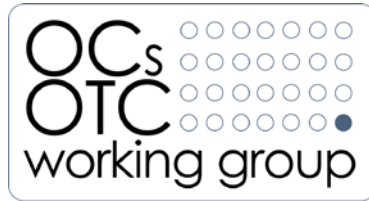
- "Are women who obtain oral contraceptives over the counter in Mexico more likely to be contraindicated for use? Results from a cohort study in El Paso, Texas"

And this one is a poster presentation:

- "Women's perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of moving oral contraceptives (OCs) over the counter (OTC)"

The final program for the meeting is not yet available, so we don't know the times of these sessions yet. If you are aware of other relevant presentations, please let Dan know. The website for the meeting is <http://www.arhp.org/Professional-Education/Annual-Meetings/rh2009>.

Presentations of interest at the APHA annual meeting, Philadelphia, November 7-11



The Border Contraceptive Access Study, a natural experiment of women obtaining OCs OTC along the US-Mexico border, will present some of the study's results during a session entitled "Access to contraception on the US-Mexico border" on Wednesday, November 11, from 8:30 to 10:00 am. Details are available at <http://apha.confex.com/apha/137am/webprogram/Session26035.html>.

Another presentation entitled "Women's experiences with contraception and their interest in over-the-counter access" will take place on Monday, November 9, at 12:30 PM. Details are available at <http://apha.confex.com/apha/137am/webprogram/Paper204743.html>.

Please let Dan know if you are aware of other relevant presentations at this meeting.

As always, please let us know if you have comments or questions about this material or if you have other information you would like to share with the group.

Thanks so much,
Dan

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