



April 5, 2013

Dear Working Group Member,

The OCs OTC Working Group celebrates the decision of federal judge Edward R. Korman, who ruled this morning to make levonorgestrel-based emergency contraception (EC) available over the counter (OTC) without age or point-of-sale restriction in the US. Prior to this ruling, EC was kept behind the counter and required a prescription for women aged 16 and younger, resulting in significant barriers to access for this time-sensitive product for women of all ages.

In his decision, the judge ruled that the government's refusal to lift restrictions on access to EC was "arbitrary, capricious, and unreasonable," and that "the obstructions in the path of those adolescents in obtaining levonorgestrel-based emergency contraceptives under the current behind-the-counter regime have the practical effect of making the contraceptives unavailable without a doctor's prescription." You can read the full decision [here](#).

This ruling sets an important precedent for a future OTC daily oral contraceptive (OC) in the US, which we hope will also be approved without an age restriction. Research shows that adolescents are interested in using an OTC OC, and young women are very unlikely to have medical contraindications to the pill. We hope that the resolution of this issue for EC and the ultimate victory of science over politics will encourage pharmaceutical companies to invest in the necessary research that will lead to the approval of an OTC daily OC.

Finally, while today's decision is a huge advance, women will continue to need a prescription for OTC EC in order to have the medication covered by insurance. We urge HHS to remove the prescription requirement for coverage of OTC contraceptives without cost sharing under the Affordable Care Act, so that all women can easily access EC and other OTC contraceptives without the barrier of cost or having to get a prescription.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan", is positioned below the "Thanks," text.

Daniel Grossman, MD
Vice President for Research, Ibis Reproductive Health

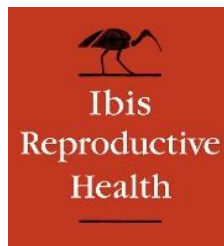
Get involved in the OCs OTC Working Group!

There are several ways you can get involved in the working group. 1) "Like" us on [Facebook page!](#) 2) Sign on to our [statement of purpose](#). We welcome both institutional and individual endorsements. 3) Write a blog post, op-ed, or piece in your organization's newsletter or campus newspaper. If you are interested in this, we would be happy to help provide feedback and background articles, as well as help you think about ways to frame the piece. 4) Tweet about OCs OTC using the hashtags [#OCsOTC](#) and [#freethepill](#). 5) Email [Dan](#) or [Kate](#) with any questions, comments, feedback, or other ideas.

About us

The Oral Contraceptives (OCs) Over-the-Counter (OTC) Working Group is an informal coalition of reproductive health and rights organizations, nonprofit research and advocacy groups, university-based researchers, and prominent clinicians who share an interest in women's health and access to contraception. Our goal is to evaluate objectively the risks and benefits of demedicalizing contraceptive care, with an eye toward improving access to OCs and potentially other hormonal contraceptive methods by making them available without a prescription.

The working group is coordinated by Ibis Reproductive Health.



www.ibisreproductivehealth.org

Contact us

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