

July 31, 2013

**Dear Working Group Member,**

Last month we celebrated the removal of the final barrier to true over-the-counter (OTC) availability of emergency contraception (EC) in the US, and we're already seeing Plan B One-Step available on the shelf without a prescription. We look forward to harnessing the momentum of this victory to gain support for OTC availability of the regular birth control pill.

In this update, we highlight several new developments related to our work. At its recent meeting, the American Medical Association (AMA) adopted a [resolution](#) in support of OTC access to oral contraceptives (OCs) that builds upon the [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' Committee Opinion](#) on this topic from last November. In addition, we have compiled a list of links to recent articles that may be of interest.

Finally, we have set the date for the next working group meeting: October 23 in New York City. This will follow the annual EC Jamboree, and the meetings of the American Society for Emergency Contraception and the International Consortium for Emergency Contraception. If you would like more information about the OCs OTC Working Group meeting, please email [Sarah Roberts](#).

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan", is positioned above the typed name.

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

## American Medical Association adopts resolution in support of OTC access to OCs

At its annual House of the Delegates meeting last month, the AMA adopted a resolution calling for more research on OTC access to OCs and urging the FDA to encourage pharmaceutical companies to submit the necessary data for an OTC switch for OCs. Below is the text of the resolution:

### RESOLUTION 507 - SUPPORT OF OVER-THE-COUNTER SALES OF ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES

RESOLVED-That our American Medical Association recommend to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that manufacturers of oral contraceptives be encouraged to submit the required application and supporting evidence for the Agency to consider approving a switch in status from prescription to over-the-counter for such products (Directive to Take Action); and be it further RESOLVED, That our AMA encourage the continued study of issues relevant to over-the-counter access for oral contraceptives. (New HOD Policy)

There was mixed testimony on the resolution, with several delegates raising concerns about contraindications to OCs, as well as concerns about cost and reimbursement. The fact that supportive testimony was offered by ACOG was important in garnering the support of others.

## Ibis releases brief on national survey of women's interest in OTC access to OCs

In June, Ibis Reproductive Health released a brief summarizing the findings of its [national survey of women's interest in OTC access to OCs](#) that was published online in *Contraception*. Overall, 62% reported being strongly or somewhat in favor of OCs being available OTC, and 37% of respondents said they were likely to use an OTC OC if it were available. This translates to a potential market of 11 million adult women in the United States.

[Click here to read the brief.](#)

## Recent news coverage related to OCs OTC

**Chapman S.** [Birth control without permission](#). *Chicago Tribune*. 2013 June 15.

This article makes the link between the final approval of OTC EC for women of all ages to a possible OTC switch for the regular birth control pill.

**Raymond E and Grossman D.** [Dealing with breast cancer](#). *New York Times*. 2013 June 3.

In this letter to the editor, we draw attention to the evidence that OC use is not associated with an increased risk of breast cancer, and in fact, is associated with a reduced risk of several cancers.

**The Inquisitr.** [Women back over-the-counter birth control pill](#). *The Inquisitr*. 2013 May 27.

This article highlights the findings of the national survey of women's interest in using an OTC pill.

## Get involved in the OCs OTC Working Group!

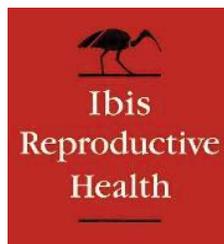
There are several ways you can get involved in the working group. If you haven't already, please sign on to our [statement of purpose](#). We are very pleased that over 50 organizations and individuals have signed on to the statement, including most recently ACOG, the American College of Clinical Pharmacy Women's Health Practice and Research Network, the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals, the Center for Reproductive Rights, Choice USA, NARAL Pro-Choice America, the National Health Law Program, the National Institute for Reproductive Health, the National Partnership for Women & Families, and Nursing Students for Choice, among many others.

Another way you can get involved in the working group is to 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. And finally, we're starting to plan the October 23 working group meeting in New York City. If you have ideas about what you'd like to see covered at that meeting, please let us know. You can email [Dan](#) or [Sarah](#) with any questions, comments, 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](http://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org)

## Contact us

**For questions or inquiries, please contact us at:**

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