

May 13, 2016

**Dear Working Group Member,**

On Tuesday, May 10, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan signed the Maryland Contraceptive Equity Act ([HB 1005/SB 848](#), sponsored by Delegate Ariana Kelly (D-Montgomery Co.) and Senator Delores Kelley (D-Baltimore Co.)), which will take effect January 1, 2018. The bill has several important components that improve contraceptive coverage for people in Maryland. One of these is to mandate that insurers cover over-the-counter contraceptive medications, such as emergency contraception like Plan B or a future OTC birth control pill, without requiring a prescription.

The Maryland Contraceptive Equity Act is a significant advance for birth control access in Maryland, and an important win for a future OTC birth control pill. By ensuring that OTC birth control medications are covered right off the shelf with no prescription needed, the Maryland bill fills a gap in the Affordable Care Act, which currently allows insurers to require a prescription for coverage of OTC birth control for women. Under the Maryland law, people will be able to avoid the unnecessary and costly burdens of visiting a clinician for a prescription and can fully benefit from OTC access.

This bill will enable people to walk right into the store and go home with the OTC medication they need, fully covered. When the bill goes into effect, it will immediately impact the person who needs time-sensitive emergency contraception. And, when a daily-use birth control pill becomes available OTC, it will also ensure coverage for the person who has run out of their birth control and would otherwise miss their next pill.

We applaud [Planned Parenthood of Maryland](#) for their advocacy to ensure the success of this bill and the Maryland legislators who passed it with bipartisan support. PPM has been an active member of the OCs OTC Working Group, leading activities to ensure public and private insurance coverage of OTC EC and shaping our strategies for ensuring coverage of an OTC pill. The bill provides model legislation that we hope other states will adopt to secure full OTC birth control coverage for people across the US.

You can learn more about the bill and its other components [here](#), and below are several recent media articles on the topic:

The Baltimore Sun: [New law puts Maryland at 'forefront' of birth control access](#)

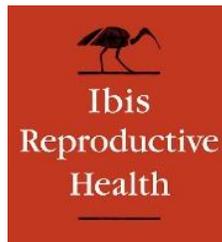
ThinkProgress: [Maryland passes the most sweeping birth control access law in the country](#)

The Washington Post: [Hogan signs bill to make birth control cheaper](#)

## About us

The Oral Contraceptives (OCs) Over-the-Counter (OTC) Working Group is a coalition of reproductive health, rights, and justice organizations, nonprofit research and advocacy groups, university-based researchers, and prominent clinicians who share a commitment to providing all women of reproductive age easier access to safe, effective, acceptable, and affordable contraceptives. The working group was established in 2004 to explore the potential of over-the-counter access to oral contraceptives to reduce disparities in reproductive health care access and outcomes, and to increase opportunities for women to access a safe, effective method of contraception, free of unnecessary control, as part of a healthy sexual and reproductive life.

The working group is coordinated by Ibis Reproductive Health.



[www.ibisreproductivehealth.org](http://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org)

## Contact us

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