

February 17, 2017

In This Update

[Save the date!](#)

[State-level OTC coverage bills](#)

[Ireland study](#)

[New Zealand reclassification](#)

[Online prescription access to OTCs](#)

[About us](#)

[Contact us](#)

Dear Working Group member,

We are happy to share that we have the date for our annual meeting of the Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group. Please mark your calendars for **Wednesday, September 27** in Washington, DC!

In this newsletter, we feature proposed legislation, research, and online prescription models that expand access to OCs in the US and in other countries around the world. We include links to legislation and articles on new contraceptive access bills in the US that guarantee insurance coverage of OTC contraceptive medications. Next, we provide a summary of a study in Ireland on OC users' views on OTC birth control following pharmacist consultation. Furthermore, New Zealand recently ruled to allow pharmacists to issue OCs under certain circumstances. We conclude with a link to our newly-updated resource that outlines the companies that prescribe birth control pills online.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Kate Grindlay
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

Save the date!

Please save the date for the next general meeting of the Oral Contraceptives (OCs) Over-the-Counter (OTC) Working Group, which will take place on **Wednesday, September 27, 2017** in Washington, DC. We will be sending out more details in the coming months. If you have any questions, please contact [Carmela](#).

Immediately before our working group meeting, the EC Jamboree, the annual meeting of the American Society for Emergency Contraception (ASEC) and the International Consortium for

Emergency Contraception (ICEC), will be held on Monday and Tuesday, September 25-26 at the same venue. Please contact [Kelly Cleland](#) or [Elizabeth Westley](#) with any questions.

State-level contraceptive coverage bills

The following states recently introduced legislation with provisions on insurance coverage of OTC contraceptives, including several that would require coverage without a prescription. We will continue to update you about these bills and others as they are introduced.

Massachusetts

Boston Globe: [Anticipating end of Obamacare, state lawmakers press for contraceptive mandate](#)

Text: [SD 939](#)

This bill would cover "all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs available over the counter without a prescription."

Minnesota

KSTP Eyewitness News: [DFL lawmakers offer common sense reproductive health care legislation](#)

Text: [SF 409](#) and [HF 795](#)

This bill would cover "all contraceptive drugs, devices, and other products approved by the Food and Drug Administration, including all over-the-counter contraceptive drugs, devices, and products approved by the Food and Drug Administration, but excluding male condoms."

New Mexico

KUNM Radio: [Lawmakers aim to protect protection](#)

Text: [HB 284](#)

This bill states that "an insurer shall not require a prescription for any item or service that is available without a prescription."

New York

NY Mag, The Cut: [New York's Attorney General introduces legislation to keep birth control free](#)

Text: [A08135](#) and [S06013A](#)

This bill would cover "all FDA-approved contraceptive drugs, devices, and other products. This includes all FDA-approved over-the-counter contraceptive drugs, devices, and products as prescribed or as otherwise authorized under state or federal law."

Oregon

New York Times: [Protecting birth control access in Oregon](#)

Text: [HB 2232](#)

This bill states that "a health benefit plan must provide coverage without a prescription for all contraceptive drugs available for over-the-counter sale that are approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration."

Ireland study on OTC access with pharmacist consultation

A [study](#) conducted in the Republic of Ireland surveyed oral contraceptive users (N=488, aged 18-50) about their views on the availability of OCs without a prescription following consultation from a pharmacist, and the role of pharmacists in dispensing them. OTC access with pharmacist consultation [was the approach](#) taken when emergency contraception became available without a prescription in 2011 in Ireland. Approximately 88% of respondents

supported making OCs available without a prescription, and 92% would obtain the pill OTC if available. Over 70% of participants reported missing a pill for reasons associated with the pill's prescription status, and 80% believed making OCs available without a prescription would make obtaining the pill easier and more convenient. A third of respondents had safety concerns about removing the pill's prescription status, and a quarter of participants were worried about potential abuse or misuse of the pill. When asked about the role of pharmacists in supplying birth control pills without a prescription, 89% of respondents believed pharmacists are able to safely supply oral contraceptives without a doctor's prescription.

Barlassina, L. Views and attitudes of oral contraceptive users towards their availability without a prescription in the Republic of Ireland. *Pharmacy Practice*. 2015 Apr-Jun; 13(2):565.

New Zealand to offer pharmacist-issued OCs

Medsafe, the medicine regulatory body of New Zealand, recently switched the classification of some OCs from prescription to restricted status in specific circumstances. Anyone over 16 years old who has been prescribed a similar formulation within the last three years and has not developed new risk factors can be sold a six-month supply from their pharmacist. Medsafe will also require pharmacists to be trained to supply OCs by the Pharmacy Council and Pharmaceutical Society. The reclassification could come into effect by the end of February.

Newshub (NZ): [Oral Contraceptive pill to be dispensed over the counter](#)

Radio New Zealand: [Pharmacies to sell pill over the counter](#)

Scoop Health (NZ): [Advancing consumer health through responsible self-care](#)

TV New Zealand: [Contraceptive pill will soon be available over counter without prescription](#)

Updated online pill prescribing resources

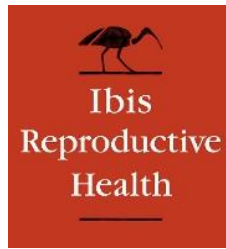


We've updated our chart, [Who prescribes the pill online?](#), that outlines the company, web address, age limitations, regional limitations, and (for the US companies) how to get it covered by insurance. Share this international guide with your networks!

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

Contact us

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