

September 7, 2017

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Dear Working Group member,

We are looking forward to celebrating World Contraception Day with you all this year on Tuesday, September 26. Expect an update soon to learn more about how you can get involved!

In this newsletter, we feature letters from both the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) that reaffirm their support for OTC access to OCs. The AAFP letter discusses the importance of including young people in the research required by the FDA for moving an OC OTC and of Medicaid and Medicare coverage of all FDA-approved contraceptive options. A letter to the editor from ACOG president, Dr. Haywood Brown, highlights the need for OTC OC availability to eliminate barriers to access in addition to, and not as a replacement for, access to the full range of contraceptive options.

We are also excited to share the latest organizations to sign onto our Statement of Purpose.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate".

Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

AAFP letter to the FDA and CMS

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) [recently released a letter](#) to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on contraceptive access and coverage to "endorse and implement policies and coverage decisions that allow adolescents, regardless of age, to be included in the over-the-counter

(OTC) oral contraceptives studies required by the FDA (e.g., label comprehension study, actual use study). Including them in such studies would help determine whether OTC access is appropriate for this population." This letter reaffirms the [statement](#) they originally made in 2014 in support of moving OCs OTC.

ACOG media highlight

The Hill recently featured OCs OTC in an article arguing that "[It's time for the feds to stop micromanaging birth control in the US](#)" and a response ([Letter: Group offering 'smart policy' on birth control misses the mark](#)) from Dr. Haywood Brown, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). The original article highlights how the US is behind the [100+ other countries](#) around the world that already offer OCs OTC, the advances in the pharmacist-prescriber movement, and the political attention this issue has piqued among both Democrats and Republicans. Brown's response critiques the original article's praises of the Republican-sponsored legislation that aims to restrict access for young people and does not address insurance coverage:

Importantly, birth control is not accessible unless it is affordable. Out-of-pocket costs are a major factor associated with inconsistent use of contraception. ACOG strongly supports the Affordable Care Act's (ACA's) requirement of preventive health services, including birth control, without patient deductibles or co-pays. Cost and coverage, far from a "separate issue," are integral to conversations to expand access to contraception.

ACOG supports over-the-counter access to birth control, but not as a substitute for the full, no co-pay coverage of all the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved methods of birth control, under the ACA. Women also need unimpeded access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC), which are more effective at preventing pregnancy than oral contraceptives, and cannot be over-the-counter.

ACOG does not support the Love/Ernst bill, which imposes an artificial age restriction, threatening to reverse our falling teen pregnancy rate, and which assumes that there are oral contraceptives that are on-the-shelf ready, even though none have been approved by the FDA.

As this issue continues to be picked up across the political spectrum, this exchange underscores the importance of continuing to center insurance coverage of all contraceptive methods as we work toward making an OC available OTC.

Statement of purpose sign-ons

We are pleased to highlight the organizations that have signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) within the last month. Please help us demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. [Email Mary](#) if you would like your organization to sign onto the statement of purpose.

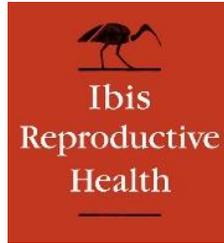
[Doctors for America](#)
[Girls Inc.](#)
[Young Women United](#)

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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