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Dear Working Group member,

We are excited to share that the American Medical Association recently approved a resolution in support of OTC OC access, including availability to people of all ages and insurance coverage without cost-sharing. Vermont and New Hampshire recently passed proactive measures to increase access to OCs. Vermont has a new law that will require each public health insurer to identify a mechanism for coverage of OTC OCs and EC. New Hampshire is the latest state to allow pharmacists to prescribe hormonal contraception. Also in this newsletter, we share an opportunity to show your support to #FreeThePill and some selected media articles featuring working group members.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Thanks,

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

Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

American Medical Association resolution

The [American Medical Association](#), the largest physicians' association in the United States, approved a [resolution](#) affirming support for equitable access to OTC contraception that includes the availability of an OTC OC, full coverage without a prescription or cost-sharing, and availability to people of all ages. The fact that over 80 organizations have signed onto the working group's [statement of purpose](#) as well as the citation of several studies conducted by working group members were highlighted to build the case for the resolution.

Pink Sheet: [AMA encourages oral contraceptive OTC options in policy update](#)
STAT News: [Pressure mounts on drug makers to move birth control over the counter](#) (featuring the involvement of the Working Group in this effort and also quotes from working group members Dan Grossman and Krishna Upadhya)

Vermont OTC coverage legislation

Vermont Governor Phil Scott signed [a bill](#) into law that requires state-issued insurance plans, in consultation with their pharmacy benefit managers, to identify a mechanism for coverage of OTC OCs and EC by January 15, 2019. Earlier in this legislative session, Vermont also introduced [a bill](#) to require coverage for all OTC methods excluding male condoms, but it did not pass.

New Hampshire pharmacist prescribing

New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu recently signed [a law](#) that allows pharmacists to prescribe the pill, patch, and ring under a standing order from a physician or advanced practice registered nurse. Pharmacists must undergo a training in order to prescribe contraceptives. The law goes into effect January 1, 2019.

Union Leader: [Dave Solomon's state house dome: batch of bills signed into law](#)

Quick call to action

[Share this image](#) on social media showing you support the effort to #FreeThePill.



Media highlights

Pharmacist and working group member Sally Rafie recently published an [op-ed](#) in the *San Diego Times* outlining the pharmacist-prescribing process in California; her new [website](#) plotting where pharmacists in some states prescribe the birth control pill, patch, ring, and shot; and showing her support for [Free the Pill](#).

"While having a yearly exam with your primary care provider or obstetrician/gynecologist is important for other health reasons, it is not necessary to link it to hormonal birth control. Now, women can get birth control pills, the patch, the ring, or the shot directly from a local pharmacist and without needing a doctor's visit or prescription first."

Working group steering committee member Britt Wahlin was quoted in an [article in The Verge](#) supporting online prescriber models that reduce barriers to OCs and future OTC access:

"I'm hoping that these online prescriber models and then our work to move a pill over the counter show that we're really ready to change the playing field in terms of how you access birth control."

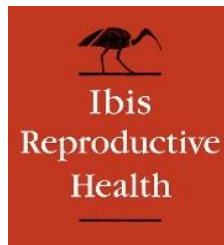
Signing onto the statement of purpose

Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#)? Does your organization send a newsletter where you could share information about our work and Free the Pill? Please help us demonstrate the broad support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. [Email Mary](#) to let her know!

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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