

August 1, 2019

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Dear Working Group member,

Our annual working group meeting, held on September 27 in Washington, DC, is just two months away! We look forward to sharing more details about the meeting and our activities for World Contraception Day (September 26) soon!

In this update, we highlight a study led by Free the Pill Project Manager Carmela Zuniga in collaboration with working group partner Advocates for Youth, which highlights youth perspectives on pharmacist prescribing of hormonal birth control based on a series of focus group discussions.

In our media highlights, we share an op-ed from steering committee member Dan Grossman (Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health) in *Women's eNews*, as well as an article from *The Hill* that provides an overview of the path to an over-the-counter birth control pill.

Allie Wollum, Senior Project Manager at Ibis Reproductive Health, will be moving to part time work as she begins a PhD program this fall and will be transitioning off from her day-to-day work on Free the Pill. We are thankful for Allie's contributions to building our evidence for moving a birth control pill over the counter and wish her all the best as she embarks on this new chapter.

And finally, I am delighted to welcome Jess Sanchez, our new Project Assistant for Free the Pill, to the campaign and the working group! Jess will be supporting key components of our work including communications, research, and administrative activities. Please join me in welcoming Jess!

I hope you are having a wonderful summer!

Warm regards,



Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

Study offers recommendations to ensure pharmacist prescribing is youth friendly

Birth control pills are safe and effective, but there are currently too many barriers to access them, and for young people overcoming these obstacles is even more challenging. Pharmacist prescribing of hormonal oral contraceptives, a model that [12 state legislatures and Washington, DC](#) have now passed, has the potential to increase contraceptive access for young people in particular. In advance of the law going into effect in Washington, DC, working group members at [Ibis Reproductive Health](#) and [Advocates for Youth](#) sought to understand the needs and perspectives of young people, and highlight their recommendations for making pharmacist prescribing services youth friendly.

Study findings showed that overall, young people viewed pharmacies as convenient locations to access birth control, but expressed concerns about privacy, cost, and facing judgement. Pharmacies should continually seek input of young people to ensure services meet their needs.

Zuniga C, Wollum A, Katcher T, Grindlay K. Youth perspectives on pharmacists' provision of birth control: Findings from a focus group study. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2019. DOI:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2019.05.013.

For access to the full-text paper, please email [Jess Sanchez](#)

Media highlights

Dan Grossman, director of [Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health \(ANSIRH\)](#) and steering committee member, penned an op-ed for [Women's eNews](#) on why moving the birth control pill over the counter and ensuring insurance coverage is so critical to reproductive freedom. The op-ed serves as a companion to Dan's recent commentary in [JAMA](#).

"But ultimately, if we want to truly make birth control pills accessible to everyone who wants them, one essential step will be making them available over the counter (OTC) without a prescription and covered by insurance."

Click to share this article on Twitter:

[True access means affordability. @DrDGrossman explains why it's time to move the birth control pill OTC in the United States AND ensure it's covered by insurance in @womens_eneeds op-ed. #FreeThePill](#)

The efforts of our working group were also featured prominently in a recent article from [The](#)

[Hill](#) highlighting the pathway to removing the prescription requirement for birth control pills and ensuring any future OTC pill is covered by insurance. Dan Grossman and [Ibis Reproductive Health](#) President Kelly Blanchard were both quoted.

Quick call to action

1 in 3 adult women in the United States have faced barriers accessing prescription birth control. Let's lift their voices and demonstrate the wide support for moving a birth control pill over the counter!

Click to Tweet:

[Use birth control pills? Wish they were easier to get? Share why you want over-the-counter access here! #FreeThePill](#)



Signing onto the statement of purpose

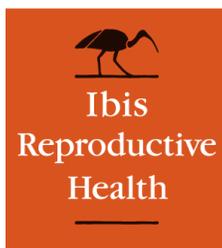
Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#)? Does your organization send a newsletter where you could share information about our work and Free the Pill? Please help us demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. [Email Mary](#) to let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

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