



## Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Updates

October 29, 2020

**Dear Working Group member,**

It was wonderful to see members of our coalition for last month's virtual annual working group meeting on September 23. While we certainly missed the organic conversations and connections that happen in person, Zoom breakout rooms provided opportunities to engage with each other and have important conversations about the future of our work.

In advance of World Contraception Day, 40 of you met with 58 congressional offices, representing 21 states and Washington, DC, for our virtual Free the Pill Hill Education Day on September 24! We met with elected officials to educate them on the importance of over-the-counter access to the pill because we know that the moment we're in underscores the need for MORE options to care for our health. We also hosted an Instagram Live conversation on September 29 about policy and contraceptive access with working group members Mara Gandal-Powers ([National Women's Law Center](#)) and Aisha Chaudhri ([EverThrive Illinois](#)). **Check it out!**

While access to contraception continues to face attacks, we hope you are feeling energized about the work we're doing together to expand access for people of all ages and backgrounds. And thank you to everyone who participated in our annual meeting and World Contraception Day activities!

With gratitude,

Kate Grindlay Kelly

Free the Pill Project Director  
Ibis Reproductive Health

## Statement on racial justice

During our annual meeting, members of the OCs OTC Working Group Steering Committee introduced our [statement on racial justice](#) acknowledging this as a critical moment to speak out about racial injustice and to make explicit the core values of bodily autonomy, community accountability/principled partnerships, and remembering and reconciliation, which have implicitly and intentionally guided our work. We affirm that contraceptive equity can never be achieved as long as racism persists.

If you or your organization has signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) and would like to sign-on to our statement on racial justice, please email [Jess Sanchez](#).

## #FreeThePill Youth Council update

[Advocates for Youth](#) selected 14 new youth activists who will organize young people to help #FreeThePill during the 2020-21 school year. These youth activists hit the ground running on World Contraception Day, sharing resources online that reached more than 150,000 young people [joining Sustain](#) to talk about birth control. In

addition, Advocates for Youth [teamed up with illustrator Mona Chalabi](#) on a design demonstrating why birth control pills should be as easy to get as other OTC medications. The cohort is now preparing for campus and community organizing activities this fall to mobilize their peers around the need for OTC birth control pills, covered by insurance, and available to people of all ages.



## Encouraging our communities to vote

We're in the midst of one of the most important elections in our lifetime, for president, control of the House and Senate, state legislatures, and more. With

November 3<sup>rd</sup> just days away, here are some resources to share with your communities.

- [California Latinas for Reproductive Justice](#) is helping California voters understand ballot propositions with this [reproductive justice voter guide](#).
- [In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#) asked Black women to share their voting plan and here are [seven stories](#) sure to inspire!
- [National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum](#) is sharing [ways to get involved in getting out the vote](#).
- [National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice](#) is providing important information via its [Election Center](#).
- [SisterReach](#) is sharing TWENTY reasons to vote. Follow [#SisterReachToThePolls](#).

## Policy update

**Elections:** We're monitoring to see if the topic of OCs OTC comes up in any of the electoral races and have already seen it come up in several. If it comes up in a race near you, [please let us know](#).

**SCOTUS:** Earlier this month, the National Women's Law Center created [a fact sheet](#) about what the Supreme Court vacancy and Amy Coney Barrett's confirmation could mean for birth control. Unfortunately, on Monday, the Senate voted to confirm Judge Barrett. This fact sheet is an important reminder of the fight ahead of us to protect and expand birth control access.

## Media highlights

**Birth control is harder to get during COVID. Over-the-counter access is crucial.**

Kelly Blanchard, president of [Ibis Reproductive Health](#) and working group steering committee member, wrote for [Truthout](#) about how the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted why an OTC pill is crucial, now, more than ever.

**#FreeThePill Fest blog posts**

As part of its first-ever #FreeThePill Fest, **Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity (URGE)**, a working group member, highlighted the voices of young people on birth control access on its *ChoiceWords Blog*.

### **Why I believe an over-the-counter birth control pill is patient-centered progress**

Cherisse Scott, founder and CEO of SisterReach and working group member, penned an op-ed in *Blavity* about why over-the-counter pill access is an important part of racial justice.

## **A quick call to action**

Want to help improve #BirthControl access in the US? We're looking for current and previous progestin-only pill (aka mini-pill) users to share their experience with us.

Learn more here: [bit.ly/pop\\_study](https://bit.ly/pop_study) #FreeThePill #ThePill

Free the Pill



**Share your experience using a progestin-only birth control pill and help improve birth control access in the United States!**

- Who:** Current and previous progestin-only pill (POP) users living in the US
- What:** Answer questions in online discussion board
- How:** [bit.ly/pop\\_study](https://bit.ly/pop_study)



*Participants can receive a \$75 gift card for their time.*

**Click to Tweet**

## Resources and more

### Free the Pill policy agenda

We're excited to release our policy agenda highlighting recommendations to expand contraceptive access in the time of COVID-19. Please share this policy agenda with your colleagues to help spread our strategies to expand contraceptive access.

[Read Policy Agenda](#)

### NPWF fact sheet

The National Partnership for Women & Families, a working group member, recently released a fact sheet highlighting the history of medical reproductive abuse and experimentation.

[Read Fact Sheet](#)

### Online prescriber chart

Many people are turning to online prescribers to have their birth control needs met during this time. Our online prescriber chart has all the latest information. Please share it with your networks!

[View Chart](#)

### Statement of purpose

Our coalition is more than 100 members strong! Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) yet?

[Sign On](#)

### 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 easier access to safe, effective, and affordable contraceptives, especially for those who currently face the greatest barriers, and support making birth control pills available over the counter. **Free the Pill** is the public-facing education campaign for the working group.

The working group is coordinated by **Ibis Reproductive Health**.

[Email Us](#)



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