



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

January 28, 2021

**Dear Working Group member,**

We are entering an exciting phase in our effort to bring a birth control pill over the counter in the United States. Here's just a snapshot of what's in store this upcoming year:

- HRA Pharma is in the final stages of its actual use trial and a submission to the FDA is forthcoming. We are so grateful to all of you for helping recruit for this pivotal study!
- As part of our commitment to racial justice, we'll be launching a study in collaboration with working group partners to assess the contraceptive needs, desires, preferences, and experiences of Indigenous peoples and people of color. This work is critical to ensuring a future OTC birth control pill is affordable and accessible to *everyone*. The study was designed by **Black Women for Wellness, Bold Futures, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, Ibis Reproductive Health, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum**, and the **Native American Community Board**.
- We've renewed our partnership with working group member **Advocates for Youth** to engage young people and build support for OTC access to birth control pills without an age restriction. We look forward to continuing to share updates from their amazing work via their #FreeThePill Youth Council with you.

We hope that 2021 brings you a new sense of hope and relief as we celebrate a new administration in the US and the opportunities for progress that it brings. This new year also marks a time of transition for our Free the Pill team. As a result of the pandemic, I have made the difficult decision to step down from my role as Project Director for the Free the Pill campaign to focus on the care of my family. I will be reducing my time and, after supporting the transition to a new project director, will shift to focus on Free the Pill research.

Mary Durden, our Free the Pill Senior Policy and Partnerships Manager, also recently made the decision to leave Ibis to start a new job. Mary has been instrumental in growing our coalition by bringing in new partners and also steered our work with state advocates working to pass and implement state OTC coverage policies. We will miss Mary's energy and humor, and wish her the best in her next endeavor.

We will be posting for new positions soon, and hope that you or someone amazing that you know might be interested in joining our team—stay tuned. In the meantime, you can always reach out to [Jess Sanchez](#) with any questions.

It has been an honor and great joy to be a part of this campaign with you all over the past 11 years and to serve as project director for the past five. I am so grateful for your partnership and ever inspired by this incredible coalition, which serves as a testament to the power of our collective effort, knowledge, and power.

With deep appreciation and thanks,



Kate Grindlay Kelly  
Free the Pill Project Director  
Ibis Reproductive Health

## New research

### **A randomized study evaluating the effect of evidence-based information on clinician attitudes about moving oral contraceptives over the counter**

A study from researchers at Ibis and [Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health \(ANSIRH\)](#), and published in the *Journal of Women's Health*, looked at provider attitudes toward oral contraceptives available OTC and how messaging impacts those attitudes. Findings suggest that evidence-based information has the potential to change provider attitudes and address common misconceptions for progestin-only pills in particular.

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

## Over-the-counter oral contraceptive use among women in Mexico: Results from a national survey

In a study published in *BMJ Sexual & Reproductive Health*, researchers from Ibis, The World Bank, and ANSIRH found that in Mexico, people of all ages turn to pharmacies for OTC access to the pill and that common factors associated with OTC pill use included being uninsured and living in an urban area, which tend to have more pharmacies.

For access to the full-text paper, please email [Jess Sanchez](mailto:Jess.Sanchez@ibis.org).

### Media highlights

#### Free the Pill: Why birth control should be available OTC

[This blog post](#) from [Power to Decide](#) features the unique experiences of six people who've benefitted from the pill, highlighting the many ways oral contraception can improve people's lives and the importance of OTC access.

### A quick call to action

Join the movement for over-the-counter birth control pills. Together, we can envision a world where everyone can build the lives they want for themselves and their families. <https://freethepill.org/act> #FreeThePill



[Click to Tweet](#)

## Resources and more

### Free the Pill policy agenda

As new legislative sessions begin, check out our policy agenda with recommendations for expanding contraceptive access in the time of COVID-19. Please share with your colleagues working on state and federal policy.

[Read Policy Agenda](#)

### 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 on racial justice

The OCs OTC Working Group Steering Committee is committed to fighting racial injustice and calling out systemic racism and inequities in sexual and reproductive health.

[Read the Statement](#)

### Statement of purpose

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

[Sign On](#)

[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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