



September 29, 2011

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Dear OCs OTC Working Group member,

The OCs OTC Working Group will be meeting in Washington, DC, on October 25. If you are interested in attending or would like more information about the meeting, please [contact me](#), and I can send you a copy of the agenda.

Below are several updates related to the working group. Please let me know if you have any comments or questions.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan", is placed below the text "Thanks,".

Daniel Grossman
Senior Associate, Ibis Reproductive Health

Comments on the HHS guidelines for Women's Preventive Services due 9/30/2011

Comments on the [HHS guidelines](#) for women's preventive services may be submitted by emailing womensguidelines@hrsa.gov. If you have not already done so, we encourage you to submit comments on the planned exemption of group health plans sponsored by religious institutions from providing contraceptive coverage, as well as the need for specific guidance regarding the coverage of FDA-approved, over-the-counter contraceptives. Please email [Dan](#) if you have questions about this.

!Si, se puede! For Latinas and other uninsured women, gaps remain in access to birth control

Shortly after the HHS guidelines were issued, Kimberly Inez McGuire of the [Reproductive Health Technologies Project](#) wrote a wonderful piece on *RH Reality Check* about the challenges uninsured women face accessing contraception.

Please [click here](#) to access.

The American Academy of Family Physicians adopts a resolution supporting insurance coverage for OTC contraceptives

At its recent Congress of Delegates, the American Academy of Family Physicians adopted the following resolution: The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) supports policies and legislation that would require public and private insurance plans to provide coverage for family planning drugs and supplies that are FDA approved, including those for sale over-the-counter.

[Click here](#) for more information.

Article on OTC access to OCs published in journal focused on "Oral contraceptive pills: Advances and progress within the last 50 years"

Grossman D. Over-the-counter access to oral contraceptives. *Expert Review of Obstetrics and Gynecology* 2011; 6(5):501-8.

Abstract:

Oral contraceptives (OCs) are one of the safest and best-studied medicines on the market. Yet, in many countries, a prescription is required to obtain OCs, often creating an unnecessary barrier to accessing this highly effective contraceptive method. A growing body of evidence suggests that over-the-counter (OTC) access to OCs is both safe and effective, and that removing the prescription barrier may increase access and reduce unintended pregnancies. Surveys among US women indicate interest in obtaining OCs in pharmacies without a prescription, and research has shown that women are accurately able to identify most contraindications to use of OCs using simple tools such as checklists. Pharmacists also can help women to screen for contraindications and provide information about method use. However, in the USA, some women might lose insurance coverage of OCs if they became available OTC. OTC availability is a promising new provision model that could improve access to OCs and should be studied more rigorously.

[Click here](#) to access the article.

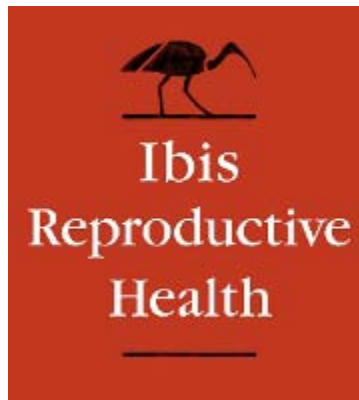
FDA issues draft guidance on self-selection studies for Rx-to-OTC switches

This month the FDA issued [draft guidance](#) on self-selection studies for non-prescription drugs and is accepting comments on the document for the next 60 days.

About us

The Oral Contraceptives (OCs) Over-the-Counter (OTC) Working Group is an informal coalition of reproductive health and rights organizations, nonprofit research and advocacy groups, university-based researchers, and prominent clinicians who share an interest in women's health and access to contraception. Our goal is to evaluate objectively the risks and benefits of demedicalizing contraceptive care, with an eye toward improving access to OCs and potentially other hormonal contraceptive methods by making them available without a prescription.

The working group is coordinated by Ibis Reproductive Health.



www.ibisreproductivehealth.org

Contact us

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