

January 12, 2018

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Dear Working Group member,

Are you attending the Women's March later this month? See below for an opportunity to share [Free the Pill](#) swag. We would also like to extend the opportunity to join the OCs OTC Working Group's subcommittees. Subcommittee members help inform key strategies and activities for the working group. In this newsletter, we also share recent media highlights and information about signing onto the statement of purpose.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

Women's March

On January 21, 2018, millions of people around the world are estimated to participate in the [Women's March](#) to "harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change." We are aware that working group members will be in attendance and we encourage you to include Free the Pill in your outreach. Tabling or passing out swag and want to share [Free the Pill](#) merchandise? [Email Mary](#) with your address and desired quantity by 12pm Eastern on Wednesday, January 17 and we can send you an assortment of Free the Pill stickers, pens, mirrors, and sunglasses to share.

Working Group subcommittees

We are excited to welcome Denicia Cadena, Policy and Cultural Strategy Director at [Young Women United](#), as co-chair of our Policy/Insurance subcommittee. She joins Pamela

Kingfisher, from the [Native American Community Board's](#) Native Women's Reproductive Justice Program, in this subcommittee's leadership. We would like to invite more participants to join our upcoming subcommittee calls later this month:

Policy/Insurance: TBD

Research: January 29 at 2:30-4:00pm ET

Young People: January 18 at 3:00-4:00pm ET

[Email Mary](#) if you would like to join or learn more about a subcommittee.

Media highlights

There were over 150 articles published mentioning OCs OTC last year. We would like to share some of the most recent articles that feature the movement to make an OC available OTC. [Newsy](#) made a video to complement their overview of the movement. [STAT](#) profiled the recent nomination of Alex Azar for US Secretary of Health and Human Services, who mentioned the need to improve birth control access at his Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing; however, the Senate missed the opportunity to question him about his opinion on a future OTC OC.

OCs OTC is also being linked to other OTC movements across the globe, including in a report from [Healthline](#) asking, "Should Viagra be an over-the-counter drug?" Rachel Perry, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Director of the Women's Options Center at the University of California, Irvine, supports OCs OTC:

OTC oral contraceptives would remove barriers to women seeking effective birth control. It would save women time and money associated with physician visits, particularly those who lack insurance. Insured women may have a gap in contraception coverage if they change providers or insurance plans. OTC access would be a way for women who would otherwise have no coverage, or a gap in coverage, to continue using a method that is working for them. There is the theoretical concern that women getting oral contraceptives OTC would be less likely to get preventive care like cervical cancer or STI screening, but because these services are not medically necessary to provide contraception, it is a barrier to require them before providing contraception.

Signing onto the statement of purpose

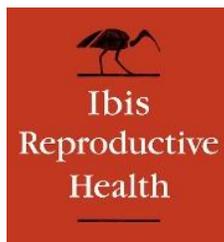
Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#)? Please help us demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. [Email Mary](#) if you would like your organization to sign onto the statement of purpose.

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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