

November 9, 2018

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Dear Working Group member,

Nearly all US women of reproductive age who have ever been sexually active have used contraception, and 60% of women aged 15-44 currently use a method. While birth control empowers people to decide if and when they want to become pregnant--a right that each of us should be able to exercise--barriers, including access and cost, can interfere with that right.

On November 13, Free the Pill will be participating in Power to Decide's [Thanks, Birth Control Day](#) to show our gratitude for what birth control makes possible for people, families, and communities around the world--and to make the case for bringing a pill over the counter! We hope you'll join us in participating and invite you to use the sample messages and social graphics in our mini toolkit below.

Earlier this month, the [National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health](#), a working group member, released findings from a national survey exploring the views and experiences of Latina/o voters towards reproductive health care. The survey revealed large support for OTC access to the pill across subpopulations, with three in four Latina/o voters overall (78%) supporting access to OTC birth control pills.

In this newsletter, we also highlight the new edition of *Contraceptive Technology*, which includes a chapter about progestin-only pills (POPs) and the benefits of moving a POP OTC, written by two members of our working group steering committee, Elizabeth Raymond and Daniel Grossman. Finally, we are also pleased to share two recent media mentions, including a *Cosmopolitan* piece quoting Ibis's president, Kelly Blanchard, that discusses our partnership with HRA Pharma to move a pill OTC in the United States.

With appreciation,



Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

Thanks, Birth Control Day

[Thanks, Birth Control Day](#), organized by working group member [Power to Decide](#), is coming up on November 13! Let your followers know you'll be participating and ask them to mark their calendars:

[If you use it, love it, and are protected by it...join us and @PowertoDecide to say Thanks, Birth Control on November 13 #ThxBirthControl](#)

Check out our mini Thanks, Birth Control Day [toolkit](#) for sample social media posts you can use to lift up the case for freeing the pill; social graphics will be added soon. And mark your calendars for Power to Decide's Twitter chat, from 2-2:30pm ET on November 13, using the hashtag #ThxBirthControl.

National survey of Latina/o voters shows support for OTC access

According to a national [survey](#) of Latina/o voters released earlier this month by the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, 78% supported OTC access for the pill if the Food and Drug Administration said it was safe and effective. This included similar large majorities across subpopulations. Large proportions also reported current barriers to birth control access, including 41% under age 45 who reported they have gone without the birth control method they wanted in the past two years because of access issues. More than a quarter (26%) reported they were uninsured, 21% reported they had run out of their method before being able to get to the doctor for a refill, and 19% reported challenges seeing a doctor for a prescription.

[You can read more here.](#)

New edition of *Contraceptive Technology* highlights OTC access

Steering committee members Elizabeth Raymond and Daniel Grossman authored a chapter in the new edition of *Contraceptive Technology*, "Progestin-Only Pills." The authors highlight the benefits of an OTC POP, including increased access to an effective and safe contraceptive method:

"The characteristics of POPs make them eminently suitable for distribution over the counter: they are safe, contraindications are rare and readily recognizable by women themselves, and the regimen is very simple."

For access to the chapter, please email [Niara Lezama](#).

Media highlights

Kelly Blanchard, president of Ibis, shined a spotlight on our efforts to free the pill in "[Birth control: will it become the ultimate luxury?](#)" in the November print issue of *Cosmopolitan*:

"Truth: Even with superb insurance, getting your BC can be a pain. 'Right now, to get the Pill, women have to find a health-care provider, get an appointment, get a prescription, then go to the pharmacy,' says Kelly

Blanchard, president of Ibis Reproductive Health, a nonprofit research organization. But what if you could just wander into a drugstore and pluck it off a shelf? Ibis and its partner, HRA Pharma, are in the process of developing a progestin-only, truly OTC birth-control pill. If it scores FDA approval, it could prompt other companies to develop additional OTC options."

Please take a moment to share with your organizations and post on social media!

Some sample, suggested posts:

[Birth control at the check-out? Yes! In the future, we can and should have an over-the-counter birth control pill available without the often time consuming and costly doctor visit. #FreeThePill](#)

[ICYMI: What about your ability to get birth control is changing? Let's set our sights on a future where our contraceptive options better meet our needs. That includes a birth control pill that's available over the counter. #FreeThePill](#)

Britt Wahlin, vice president for development and public affairs at Ibis, was quoted in a Politifact piece, "[Fact-checking Martha McSally's position on birth control](#)" about cost and insurance coverage of OTC contraceptives:

"Over-the-counter birth control pills can expand access to safe, effective contraception for women who are uninsured, who live far from health care facilities, or who do not have access to a clinic system."

Signing onto the statement of purpose

We are pleased to highlight the organizations that have signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) within the last month. 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.

[DKT International](#)

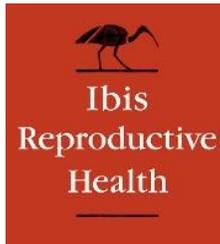
[EverThrive IL](#)

[Healthy Teen Network](#)

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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