

December 20, 2018

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Dear Working Group member,

In this update, I am delighted to share with you a few key takeaways from the National Women's Law Center's recent webinar focused on affordability, insurance strategies, and state-based policies and organizing for OTC birth control.

We also highlight several articles mentioning OTC birth control, including a *Scary Mommy* piece by working group member Tracey Wilkinson stressing the benefits of OTC access for young people, and a *HelloGiggles* piece by Monica Edwards, an If/When/How Reproductive Justice Policy Fellow at URGE, offering four reasons we need an OTC birth control pill now.

And finally, as 2018 comes to a close, I want to thank you for the collaboration, leadership, and support you brought to our Free the Pill effort this year! As threats to birth control access continue, I am proud of the coalition we've formed to advance contraceptive access and give people greater control over their sexual and reproductive health and lives.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

National Women's Law Center webinar

The National Women's Law Center (NWLC), a working group member, recently hosted a webinar sharing some findings from their project, "Creating a legal and policy framework to ensure coverage and accessibility of an OTC birth control pill." Mara Gandal-Powers, director of birth control access and senior counsel, and Vacheria Tutson, legal fellow, highlighted how some states are moving the needle on OTC contraceptive coverage through legislative and regulatory activities, offered suggestions for further state-level possibilities, and provided guidance on how to talk about an OTC birth control pill at this moment in time. Mary Durden,

communications and outreach manager at Ibis, also provided a history of our Free the Pill campaign and working group.

A [recording of this webinar as well as the slides](#) are available on NWLC's website.

Media highlights

In a *Scary Mommy* piece, Tracey Wilkinson, co-chair of our Young People Subcommittee and assistant professor of pediatrics at Indiana University School of Medicine, shared some of the struggles her pediatric patients have had in obtaining birth control and why OTC access can help improve their lives.

"Research shows that one in four teenagers not using a birth control method said they would try an over-the-counter pill. Making the pill available over the counter wouldn't be a substitute for comprehensive sex education or making other forms of birth control accessible. However, it does offer one more option without many of the barriers that currently exist."

Click to share this article on Twitter:

[Birth control improves lives, but access can be difficult, especially for young people. An over-the-counter birth control pill would help ensure people of all ages have the freedom to access the contraception they want. #FreeThePill https://www.scarymommy.com/over-the-counter-birth-control-pill/](https://www.scarymommy.com/over-the-counter-birth-control-pill/)

Monica Edwards, [If/When/How](#) Reproductive Justice Policy Fellow at URGE (Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity) and working group member, highlighted four reasons an OTC birth control pill is needed in this Thanks, Birth Control Day article for [HelloGiggles](#):

"The realities of life already get in the way of accessing birth control. Not everyone is able to take time off work, afford transportation, or pay for child care in order to go to their doctor, just to get a birth control prescription. For those without insurance, paying for a doctor's visit and for the prescription out of pocket can put the pill out of reach. For those who are LGBTQ, non-binary, an immigrant, or an intersection of these identities, worrying about revealing your family's status or being shamed at the doctor's office pushes the pill even further out of reach. Young people often feel the weight of these barriers most acutely."

Click to share this article on Twitter:

[There are SO many reasons why we need a range of birth control options--including an over-the-counter birth control pill! #FreeThePill https://hellogiggles.com/lifestyle/health-fitness/4-reasons-we-need-over-the-counter-birth-control/](https://hellogiggles.com/lifestyle/health-fitness/4-reasons-we-need-over-the-counter-birth-control/)

In a recent *Popular Science* article, Britt Wahlin, Ibis's vice president for development and public affairs and working group steering committee member, explained why online platforms, which require a reliable internet connection, computer, or smart device, aren't a perfect solution to barriers to accessing birth control:

"We need to keep in mind that the people who have a harder time accessing birth control may not have these technologies available to them."

Quick call to action

Share this image on social media showing you support the effort to #FreeThePill.

[This holiday season \(and every season\), we're working to make birth control pills more accessible! An OTC pill would make it easier for people to plan if and when to have children and give them greater control over their reproductive health #FreeThePill](#)



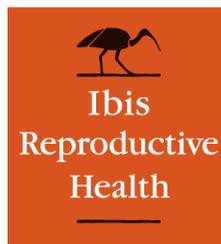
Signing onto the statement of purpose

Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#)? Does your organization send a newsletter where you could share information about our work and Free the Pill? Please help us demonstrate the broad support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. [Email Mary](#) to let her know!

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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