



Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Updates

December 17, 2020

Dear Working Group member,

This year has been full of unexpected challenges, in our professional lives and in our personal. In the contraceptive space, we've seen birth control pushed further out of reach for millions who need it as barriers to access, rooted in systemic racism and other structural inequities, have been exacerbated by the pandemic. And we lost one of the staunchest fighters for contraceptive access on the Supreme Court just months after her final dissent in a ruling that will give people's employers or universities the power to decide if they have contraceptive coverage.

But we've also seen meaningful progress, including important victories for rights and justice this election season, headway in HRA Pharma's actual use trial and an FDA submission for an OTC pill now in sight, and New Jersey becoming the ninth state to mandate insurance coverage for OTC contraception without a prescription.

I'm proud of the coalition we've strengthened this year, and the ways we've been there for each other through moments of hardship and joy. We're headed into an exciting phase and I'm thrilled to continue working alongside you to make an OTC birth control pill that's affordable, fully covered by insurance, and accessible to all a reality!

With immense gratitude and hope for the future,

Kate Grindlay Kelly
Free the Pill Project Director

#FreeThePill Youth Council update

Advocates for Youth's **#FreeThePill Youth Council** is building on the success of this year's slate of public digital trainings to help more and more young people organize for an OTC pill. During Advocates' most recent training, council members Sarah Hamid and Courtney Jones shared their experiences as youth organizers for contraceptive justice.

Courtney, who has been a member since the council's inception in 2019, shared that this experience has broadened their understanding of contraceptive justice, while Sarah, a new member, shared how excited she is to uplift the voices of Indigenous peoples in the fight for birth control access. Following additional trainings, council members will be able to fully lead workshops for other young people in the coming months.



Celebrating "Free the Pill" resolution for Indigenous peoples

When emergency contraceptives were approved for OTC access in the US, they were not available OTC through the Indian Health Service (IHS) until FIVE years later! The **Native American Community Board (NACB)**, a working group member, has been working to ensure Native communities have access to a future FDA-approved OTC birth control pill at the same time as the rest of the country. And last month, the National Congress of American Indians **passed NACB's resolution** (#PDX-20-049) in support of an "over-the-counter birth control pill that's affordable, covered by insurance, provided within IHS, and available to people of all ages as essential to bridging these drastically widened gaps." This achievement is critical in ensuring equitable access of a future OTC pill and a moment to celebrate!

Media highlights

What controls birth control?: A brief context on the centrality of Black reproductive freedom to collective liberation

On [Choicewords Blog](#), from working group member [URGE](#), Victor Ultra Omni writes that an OTC pill cannot be truly free for all without freeing Black people, and acknowledging the harmful past of oral contraceptives.

I need birth control to survive. The Supreme Court could restrict my access.

[Refinery29](#) published an op-ed by Julia Youman detailing concerns about affordable contraceptive access, and how potential SCOTUS rulings on the ACA could impact accessibility to birth control for millions that need it.

A quick call to action

Looking for another way to get birth control?

Check out the updated [@FreeThePill](#) online prescriber chart to see where you can access birth control pills online! [#FreeThePill](#)



[Click to Tweet](#)

Resources and more

Job opportunity

Advocates for Youth is seeking a strategic projects coordinator who will lead the [#FreeThePill](#) Youth Council and

State laws chart

Some states have passed legislation to make the pill easier to get. Our state laws chart shows which states have

provide communications support to AMAZE.org. Please share the job description widely!

[Learn More](#)

guaranteed increased access to birth control pills.

[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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