



## Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Updates

February 25, 2021

**Dear Working Group member,**

As we approach the end of Black History Month, I'd like to take a moment to celebrate the amazing Black leaders and Black-led organizations in our coalition who've spent the past year taking care of their communities as a global pandemic disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous, and other people of color swept across our nation; leading protests in every pocket of our country demanding justice for Black lives; organizing on the ground to increase voter registration and encourage people to exercise their right to vote; and continuing the fight for human rights and reproductive justice.

Years ago the working group formally adopted a reproductive justice (RJ) approach to our work to move OCs OTC, which was the direct result of the input, leadership, and engagement of our RJ partners. Our coalition owes a debt of gratitude to the Black-led and RJ organizations in the coalition for shaping a vision for OTC access that centers the communities most impacted by contraceptive barriers and inequities. As we move into the next phase of our work with a **new campaign leader**, all of us on the Free the Pill team are excited to continue to work with all of you to achieve our goals.

With warm regards,

Britt Wahlin  
Vice President for Development and Public Affairs  
Ibis Reproductive Health

**We're hiring a Free the Pill Project Director!**

We are seeking a project director to oversee the implementation of our ambitious program of work to move a birth control pill over the counter in the United States. The project director will play a leadership role in the Free the Pill team at Ibis, the OCs OTC Working Group coalition and steering committee, and public-facing efforts to raise awareness about OCs OTC. The ideal candidate will have campaign management experience and a proven track record for managing the implementation of complex projects as well as experience working in reproductive health, rights, and justice. [Learn more here](#) and share widely within your networks!

## Exciting update in pivotal birth control study

Thanks to all of your support and efforts, HRA Pharma has enrolled more than 50 young teens, aged 11-14, in their actual use trial. This achievement is a huge milestone in the FDA process to make a birth control pill available over the counter in the United States and to ensure young people are not left behind when that switch occurs.

## #FreeThePill Youth Council update

Advocates for Youth is excited to announce they've hired Angela Maske, M.S., to be the new coordinator for the #FreeThePill Youth Council. As a student at Georgetown University, Angela served as president of H\*yas for Choice, participated in Advocates' Condom Collective program, and organized on global reproductive health issues through Advocates' International Youth

Leadership Council. She has also interned at Advocates, SIECUS, and Power to Decide, and is more than ready to hit the ground running in helping young people organize their communities to support bringing oral contraceptives over the counter!



## Policy updates

[California](#), [Hawaii](#), and [Kentucky](#) have introduced bills that would cover over-the-counter contraception without requiring a prescription, and a [bill](#) is moving in Maryland that would broaden OTC contraceptive access through repealing the prohibition on the sale of OTC drugs in vending machines. In addition, several states have introduced bills that would allow pharmacists to prescribe and dispense

hormonal contraceptives, though many of these bills contain age restrictions. The **National Women's Law Center** released an **analysis** outlining how these restrictions are not evidence based and how they may harm young people.

## Announcing OCs OTC research brown bag series

Join us for the very first OCs OTC research brown bag session on **Tuesday, March 30 from 12-1pm ET!** This is the first in a new quarterly series of informal sessions where working group members can learn, ask questions, and talk about research related to OCs OTC. In our first session, Allie Wollum, senior project manager at Ibis, will provide an overview of a study she led on how evidence-based information impacted clinician attitudes on moving oral contraceptives over the counter. Results of the study have been **published** in the *Journal of Women's Health*.

[Register here](#)

## UK considering reclassifying two POPs

The **UK government has announced** it is considering reclassifying two types of progestin-only oral contraceptive pills to be sold at pharmacies without a prescription. The formulation under consideration is a desogestrel-containing pill. Two pharmaceutical companies, HRA Pharma and Maxwellia, had asked the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to make their progestin-only pill products available for over the counter sale under a pharmacist's supervision. **The MHRA is accepting public comments on the reclassification of both products through March 5.** We encourage working group members to share their views!

## A quick call to action

Do you have campaign management experience? Want to help move a birth control pill over the counter? Apply now to help lead the movement to bring a birth control pill over the counter and #FreeThePill @IbisRH [bit.ly/3staEko](https://bit.ly/3staEko)

## We're hiring!

# Free the Pill Project Director



We are seeking an individual with campaign management experience who is passionate about reproductive health, rights, and justice to oversee the implementation of an ambitious program of work to move oral contraceptive pills (OCs) over the counter (OTC) in the United States.

Apply now @ [ibisreproductivehealth.org/about-us/employment](https://ibisreproductivehealth.org/about-us/employment)

Free the Pill

Priority given to applications received by March 19

[Click to Tweet](#)

## Resources and more

### Free the Pill policy agenda

Check out our policy agenda with recommendations for expanding contraceptive access in the time of COVID-19. Please share with your colleagues working on state and federal policy.

[Read Policy Agenda](#)

### Online prescriber chart

Many people are turning to online prescribers to have their birth control needs met during this time. Our online prescriber chart has all the latest information. Please share it with your networks!

[View Chart](#)

### Statement on racial justice

The OCs OTC Working Group Steering Committee is committed to fighting racial injustice and calling out systemic

### Statement of purpose

Our coalition is more than 100 members strong! Has your organization

racism and inequities in sexual and reproductive health.

signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) yet?

[Read the Statement](#)

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[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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