



Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Updates

October 29, 2021

Dear Working Group member,

I hope that you are doing well and taking good care. In September we hosted a series of events to reunite the working group, educate policymakers about our movement to bring birth control pills OTC, and **celebrate World Contraception Day on social media**.

Over 70 of our coalition members convened virtually for our annual meeting on September 22. We heard updates from HRA Pharma and Cadence Health (the two pharmaceutical companies planning to submit prescription-to-OTC switch applications to the FDA), reflected on the progress that has been made to date, and brainstormed next steps for collective action.

On September 23, we commemorated World Contraception Day through digital activities and met with 52 House and Senate offices for Hill Education Day. These activities served as powerful opportunities to amplify our vision for moving birth control pills OTC and ensuring that they are covered by insurance, affordable, and accessible to all ages.

We are excited to build upon last month's activities and have included information on upcoming opportunities to stay engaged, including our Free the Pill webinar series which **continues on November 18** with a conversation on learnings from the emergency contraception OTC journey. We hope to see you there!

With appreciation,

Victoria Nichols

Victoria Nichols
Free the Pill Project Director
Ibis Reproductive Health

Join us for a Free the Pill webinar: November 18

As we work to switch birth control pills from prescription to over-the-counter status, what can we learn from the history of emergency contraception and its FDA-approval?

Join us on **November 18 from 12-1:30pm ET** for the next conversation in our Free the Pill webinar series, “What can Emergency Contraception OTC Teach the Oral Contraception OTC Movement Eight Years Later?” to learn more! You'll hear from four fierce reproductive health advocates about the history that made over-the-counter emergency contraception possible in the US, the continued work to expand access, and key learnings for the #FreeThePill movement.

[Register](#)

#FreeThePill Youth Council update



The #FreeThePill Youth Council celebrated World Contraception Day with a conversation between Sriha Srinivasan, #FreeThePill youth council member and TikTok sex educator, and Kuhoo Verma, star of Hulu's *Plan B*. [Check out their conversation on YouTube!](#)

Youth council members also participated in Advocates for Youth's Youth Activism Institute, during which they learned about birth control history, organizing skills, and developed their plans for the year.

Policy update

Members of the OCs OTC Working Group joined 35 members of the Family Planning Coalition in sending a [letter to the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Treasury](#) regarding the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive coverage

requirement which has allowed for "**access to contraceptive care and its attendant benefits.**"

The letter outlines recommendations for administrative actions to expand and solidify the contraceptive coverage requirement including making it clear that plans must cover OTC preventive services such as birth control methods without requiring a prescription. Free the Pill team members, along with other groups who signed the letter, participated in a follow-up meeting with members of the Biden Administration to discuss the letter.

Welcome to new statement of purpose sign-ons

We are pleased to highlight the organizations that have recently signed onto our **statement of purpose (SOP)** which will continue to help us demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available over the counter! Learn more about our new SOP sign-ons:

- **Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health (ANSIRH)**
- **Black Women's Health Imperative**
- **Contraceptive Access Initiative (CAI)**
- **NY Birth Control Health Access Project**

Social media highlights

This World Contraception Day, Representative Jerry Nadler (D-NY) and Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) shared their support for over-the-counter birth control pills. Their Tweets included #FreeThePill and had a combined reach of over 900K!



Rep. Nadler [@RepJerryN...](#) · 9/23/21 ...
 On [#WorldContraceptionDay](#), we must acknowledge the systemic barriers that prevent people from getting the birth control they need and exercising their reproductive rights. Equitable access to affordable over-the-counter birth control pills is long overdue. [#FreeThePill](#)



Senator Patty Murray [@...](#) · 9/26/21 ...
 There should be no barriers to get contraceptive care. Let's [#FreeThePill](#), and keep working to ensure everyone seeking any kind of reproductive health care—whether it's contraception or abortion—are able to get it. [#WorldContraceptionDay](#)



A quick call to action

We want a future where everyone has the freedom and resources they need to make decisions about their own bodies and lives with dignity & respect—that's why we're calling for over-the-counter birth control pills. [#FreeThePill](#)

Over-the-counter birth control pills without barriers.

Now that's the future we want!



Click to Tweet

Resources and more

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.

[Sign On](#)

Statement of purpose

Our coalition is more than 100 members strong! Join our movement to bring birth control pills OTC by signing our **statement of purpose**.

[Sign On](#)

State of the movement briefing

Hear from key leaders about the history of the movement to bring OCs OTC, where we are now, and how you can play a role to #FreeThePill.

[Watch Now](#)

Contraception for Black women webinar

The **Black Women's Health Imperative** hosted a conversation about contraception awareness and education featuring Free the Pill Project Director Victoria Nichols.

[Watch Now](#)

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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