

August 11, 2008

# Message to the Working Group on Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter

Dear members of the OCs OTC Working Group,

We wanted to give you a quick update on some issues relevant to the group:

## Panel at the annual meeting of the American Public Health Association

At the APHA meeting in San Diego in October, there will be a panel presentation entitled "Moving Oral Contraceptives over the Counter." If the links to the individual abstracts don't work below, you can access the session at <u>http://apha.confex.com/apha/136am/webprogram/Session23358.html</u>. We hope to see some of you there!

# Monday, October 27, 2008: 2:30 PM

#### Oral 2:30 PM

Bait and Switch: Will Over-The-Counter Oral Contraceptives Expand Access and Use Among Women of Color and Low-Income Women?

# Destiny Lopez, MPA

2:50 PM

Making contraception easier and promoting women's health: What is the role of the Rx requirement for the Pill?

Amy Allina and Cynthia A. Pearson

#### 3:10 PM

Provider perspective: What do clinicians and pharmacists think about over-the-counter provision of oral contraceptives?

Daniel Grossman, MD and Kelly Blanchard3:30 PMSafety and effectiveness of OCs: Making the case for an OTC switch

Kelly Blanchard, MSC and Daniel Grossman, MD

## Letter to the editor of Lancet about OTC access for OCs

In the last update we sent around, we mentioned the Lancet editorial that accompanied a meta-analysis of studies demonstrating the protective effect of COC use against ovarian cancer—and advocated for OTC access. A letter to the editor was published in May, which is attached, that argues that women may not be well served by OTC provision because women will not be given the option of receiving a long-acting reversible contraceptive (like the IUD or implant). It also brings up issues related to counseling and safety. The LARC argument is interesting—although it sounds a lot like holding women hostage to get their Pap smears. We'd be curious to know what you think.

## Internet provision of OCs in the UK

You may have heard about the launch of a website in the UK where current OC users there can purchase three packs of pills online. Here's a link to the website: http://www.drthom.com/sexual health/oral contraceptive pill Microgynon Yasmin Cilest/the pill the c

ontraceptive pill



### Accuracy of women's self-screening for contraindications to oral contraceptive use

An article based on the study that Ibis and the University of Texas performed in El Paso examining women's ability to self-screen for contraindications to OCs will be coming out in *Obstetrics and Gynecology* next month. We'll circulate a copy when it's in press.

#### Future working group meeting

We're hoping to plan a meeting of the working group later this year and will keep you informed about possible dates!

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about the material presented here. And also let me know if you'd like to be removed from the list.

Thanks, Dan

Daniel Grossman, MD Senior Associate Ibis Reproductive Health San Francisco, California