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Dear Working Group Member,

We are very pleased to share the announcement below about new funding that will allow us to bring our work to move an OTC OC across the finish line. We thank you, our working group partners, for helping us arrive at this exciting moment and getting us so close to making an OTC OC a reality.

We plan to hold informational calls in the new year. Please stay tuned for more information and, in the meantime, feel free to get in touch with any questions.

Wishing you a warm and restful holiday season,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan".

Daniel Grossman, MD
Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the University of California, San Francisco and Senior Advisor, Ibis Reproductive Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Britt".

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

Ibis Reproductive Health announces new grant to "Free the Pill"

Packard Foundation grant will support the effort to move a birth control pill over the counter

December 17, 2015 - [Ibis Reproductive Health](#) is thrilled to announce a \$12 million grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation in support of our work to move an oral contraceptive (OC) over the counter (OTC) in the United States. Removing the prescription requirement for a safe and effective birth control pill will make it easier for people to access contraception and achieve their reproductive health goals.

The grant will support the work of the [Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group](#), a coalition of advocates, researchers, and clinicians who share a commitment to providing all women of reproductive age easier access to safe, effective, acceptable, and affordable contraceptives. The working group is coordinated by Ibis and led by a [steering committee](#). Funding will be used to work with a pharmaceutical company to complete the necessary research and submit an application for an OTC OC product to the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In addition, this support will be used to plan and implement a range of communications, education, and advocacy activities to ensure that a future OTC pill is accessible to people of all ages, especially those who currently face the most barriers to accessing effective contraception. In particular, the working group will focus on securing insurance coverage of OTC contraceptives without a prescription requirement; building the case for FDA approval without an age restriction; and ensuring that low-income women, women of color, and young people are part of the movement to bring an OC product OTC in the United States and have access to the product once approved.

"The amazing work and collaboration among the members of the OCs OTC Working Group have gotten us to this pivotal point," said Ibis President Kelly Blanchard. "We are proud to work with such a diverse and dynamic coalition to make OTC birth control pills a reality in the US, and we are excited to have the opportunity to significantly accelerate this work. We are also grateful for The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's longstanding support of the OCs OTC Working Group, without which we could not have arrived at this critical moment."

Requiring a prescription for the birth control pill serves as a barrier for many people, including the millions who remain uninsured in the United States and those without easy access to a health care provider, transportation, or child care. Moving a birth control pill over the counter would allow people to obtain their pills in a pharmacy or supermarket, at their convenience, and without an unnecessary visit to the doctor and the associated expenses that come with an appointment.

Research shows that women of all ages, racial identities, and socioeconomic groups support moving a pill over the counter. Making a birth control pill available OTC could improve access for women who do not currently use a contraceptive method, and help those who currently take birth control pills to continue without breaks caused by the inconvenience of the prescription or the cost of the doctor's visit. The birth control pill meets all of the FDA's criteria for OTC sale and has a strong safety profile, including compared to currently available OTC medications. Leading medical groups support the switch, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Family Physicians. An OTC OC option would provide an additional, more convenient way to access the birth control pill,

while still leaving the option to seek care and advice from a health care provider.

"We will work with our coalition partners to ensure that this change makes a significant difference in the lives of US women, particularly those who face the biggest hurdles to accessing quality contraceptive care. New research and attention from professional groups, media outlets, and politicians have raised the profile of the issue and we plan to harness that momentum. The guaranteed contraceptive coverage under the Affordable Care Act is helping more people access contraception, and the availability of an OTC pill will be another way to ensure everyone has access to the full range of options and can choose the method that works best for them," said Blanchard.

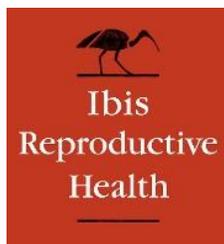
Expanding access to contraception has been a priority since Ibis's founding, and our research has identified innovative ways to improve access to contraceptive information, services, and options that meet women's needs. This grant supports the Packard Foundation's commitment to ensuring that women and young people have access to the quality reproductive health information and services they want and need throughout their lives to make decisions that are right for them. Ibis looks forward to undertaking this ambitious program of activities and seizing this unique opportunity to move an OC OTC.

Please direct inquiries to [Britt Wahlin](#), Vice President for Development and Public Affairs at Ibis Reproductive Health.

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

For questions or inquiries, please contact us at:

Ibis Reproductive Health
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100
Oakland, CA 94612
Tel.: 510-986-8932
Fax: 510-896-8960
Email: OCsOTC@ocsotc.org

www.OCsOTC.org

[Facebook](#)