

January 23, 2019

## In This Update

[Washington State's  
Reproductive Health Parity  
Act](#)

[Media highlights](#)

[Quick call to action](#)

[Statement of purpose](#)

[About us](#)

[Contact us](#)

## Dear Working Group member,

In November, the Trump administration issued [two final rules](#) to broaden employers' ability to be exempt from the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive coverage requirement. These were slated to go into effect in mid-January 2019. However, last week, a [federal judge in California](#) granted a preliminary injunction preventing the rules from going into effect in 13 states and Washington, DC. A [federal judge in Pennsylvania](#) then issued a nationwide preliminary injunction. While we celebrate the rulings by the California and Pennsylvania courts, we are reminded of the continued attacks on people's reproductive freedom and the work ahead.

In this update, we highlight a recent op-ed from Ibis President Kelly Blanchard describing the future we're fighting for, and how an over-the-counter birth control pill is one critical component to achieving truly accessible sexual and reproductive health care for all. We are also excited to share that as of January 1, 2019, residents of Washington State can now get OTC contraceptives--including a future OTC birth control pill--without cost sharing and without a prescription under the state's Reproductive Parity Act. We are thrilled to see Washington join the growing [list of states covering OTC contraceptives](#).

With appreciation for your continued support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style.

Kate Grindlay Kelly  
Project Director/Associate  
Ibis Reproductive Health

## Washington State's Reproductive Health Parity Act

Washington State's Reproductive Parity Act went into effect on January 1, 2019, ensuring that OTC contraception, including emergency contraception, condoms, spermicides, sponges, and a future OTC birth control pill, will be available without cost sharing or a prescription for residents with state health insurance plans.

The Stranger: [Over-the-counter contraceptives are now free for Washingtonians with insurance](#)

## Media highlights

Kelly Blanchard, president of Ibis, highlighted the future we fight for, where people of all ages have access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care and autonomy in decisions about their own bodies, in a recent op-ed, "[It's time for an over-the-counter birth control pill](#)," in Truthout.

*"Improved access to safe, effective birth control is critical to people's reproductive rights and health. Making a birth control pill available over the counter will help ensure everyone can get the birth control they need, when they need it. That's part of the future we must fight for, in which everyone has the resources necessary to decide whether to become a parent, and parent the children they decide to have in safe and sustainable communities."*

Click to share this article on Twitter:

["An over-the-counter pill would reduce the unnecessary barriers that stand between women and the birth control they need, which disproportionately affect low-income, poor and young women, and would increase opportunities for all people to access safe, effective contraception." #FreeThePill](#)

## Quick call to action

Show your support for ensuring everyone has access to the birth control method that meets their needs, including a birth control pill available OTC.

[There is no one birth control method that is right for everyone. We deserve access to all of our options, without coercion. One of those options should be an over-the-counter pill. #FreeThePill](#)

## Statement of purpose sign-ons

We are pleased to highlight the organizations that have signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) within the last month. Please help us demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. Email [Mary](#) if you would like your organization to sign onto the statement of purpose.

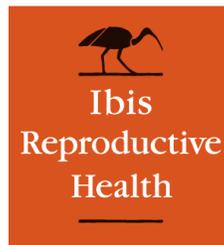
[Adolescent Health Initiative at University of Michigan](#)

[Women's Rights & Empowerment Network \(WREN\)](#)

## 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](http://www.ibisreproductivehealth.org)

## Contact us

**For questions or inquiries, please contact us at:**

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