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## Dear Working Group member,

I am excited to share that **our 2019 Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Meeting will be held on September 27, 2019 in Washington, DC.** We will be hosting a joint reception with the [American Society for Emergency Contraception \(ASEC\)](#) on the evening of September 26, following ASEC's annual meeting. We will also be organizing Free the Pill activities on the Capitol on September 26 for World Contraception Day. We will share more details in the coming months, so for now we hope you will save the date!

In this update, I am delighted to let you know about our new collaboration with [Advocates for Youth](#), a working group partner, to develop a youth-adult partnership model for the Free the Pill campaign and build an organizing strategy that centers the voices and experiences of young people in demanding equal access to a future OTC pill.

Later this month, on April 23 at 2pm ET, we will be hosting a webinar with working group members Tracey Wilkinson (Indiana University) and Melissa Kottke (Emory University), who will share their research using a human-centered design framework to create messages with and for young people about dual protection for an OTC pill. [Register here!](#)

Additionally, we share a recording of the webinar we hosted last month, "Native American Community Board: Indigenous women's health, reproductive justice, and freeing the pill," as well as highlights from "Let's talk birth control: Contraception policy reform in the States & DC," a panel discussion in Washington, DC, hosted by the [R Street Institute](#) at the end of March.

We also remember Philip Corfman and Linda Potter, both early members of the working group who passed away recently.

We are delighted to also share the passage of New Mexico's contraceptive equity bill, which will guarantee coverage of a future OTC birth control pill. Congratulations to Young Women United, ACLU of New Mexico, and all of the advocates in New Mexico who helped make this happen! Finally, we share two pharmacist prescribing legislation updates and an editorial from the *Des Moines Register's* editorial board calling for an OTC birth control pill.

With great appreciation,



Kate Grindlay Kelly  
Project Director/Associate  
Ibis Reproductive Health

### Save the date for our annual working group meeting!

Please save the date for the 2019 Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Meeting, which will take place on September 27, 2019 in Washington, DC. We will also be organizing Free the Pill activities on the Capitol on September 26 for World Contraception Day. More details will be shared in upcoming newsletters. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact [Niara Lezama](#).

The American Society for Emergency Contraception's annual meeting, the EC Jamboree, will be held on Thursday, September 26 at the same venue. We will be holding a joint reception with ASEC on the evening of September 26. Please contact [Kelly Cleland](#) with any questions.

### Bringing youth power to the Free the Pill campaign

Ensuring people of all ages have the freedom to access the contraception they want, regardless of who they are or how much money they have, is a key pillar of our effort to free the pill. Young people face some of the greatest barriers to birth control access, including the prescription requirement for the pill and systemic ageism that stigmatizes the choices that young people make for themselves. The Free the Pill project team and OCs OTC Steering Committee have engaged in a thoughtful process to identify ways that we can help shift the narrative around youth agency and sexuality.

To that end, we are delighted to announce a collaboration with [Advocates for Youth](#), a working group partner, to develop a youth-adult partnership model for the Free the Pill campaign. Together with Advocates for Youth, we will build an organizing strategy that engages and centers the voices and experiences of young people, and supports them in

demanding equal access to a future OTC pill. As part of this partnership, we look forward to welcoming two young people as members of our steering committee during our annual working group meeting. We look forward to sharing more details about our youth-adult partnership model in future newsletters as well as to working with you to identify additional opportunities to center young people in this work.

### **Dual protection with an OTC pill webinar**

We invite you to join us for a webinar, "Dual protection with OTC contraception: A human-centered design approach," featuring working group members [Tracey Wilkinson](#), an assistant professor of pediatrics at Indiana University, and [Melissa Kottke](#), an associate professor in the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Emory University. They will share their research using a human-centered design framework to create messages with and for young people around dual protection for an OTC pill. The webinar will take place Tuesday, April 23 from 2-3pm ET. [Register here!](#)

### **Native American Community Board webinar**

Last month we hosted a webinar, "Native American Community Board: Indigenous women's health, reproductive justice, and freeing the pill," with working group members Charon Asetoyer and Pam Kingfisher from the [Native American Community Board \(NACB\)](#), who highlighted findings from focus groups, roundtables, and women's meetings with Native women and youth about reproductive justice, birth control knowledge and access, and the Free the Pill campaign.

"Native women are still being left behind on the most progressive reproductive health and justice issues," said Charon Asetoyer, founder and CEO of the Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center, a project of the NACB. Charon and Pam helped to lead the efforts for OTC emergency contraception coverage and access within Indian Health Service facilities, and are building a movement to ensure that Native women also have equal access to an OTC pill when it is available.

The Resource Center's Reproductive Justice Program lifts up the voices of Native women and youth by advocating for policy changes at the federal level including in the Indian Health Service, which provides health care services to roughly 2.2 million of the nation's 3.7 million American Indians and Alaska Natives.

If you weren't able to attend the live webinar, we invite you to [view a recording](#).

### **R Street briefing on contraceptive policy**

Last month, Dan Grossman, steering committee member and director of [Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health \(ANSIRH\)](#), participated in a panel discussion, "Let's talk birth control: Contraception policy reform in the States & DC," hosted by the [R Street Institute](#). In his remarks and responses to moderator and audience questions, Dan shared the wealth of medical evidence in support of an OTC birth control pill as well as the working group's effort to ensure that any OTC option is affordable, covered by insurance, and available to people of all ages. Experts on the panel also included Jammie Fields, senior policy analyst at Planned Parenthood Federation of America, a working group partner; Courtney Joslin, commercial freedom fellow at R Street Institute; and Inez Stepman, senior policy analyst at the

Independent Women's Forum. Caroline Kitchens, director of federal government affairs at R Street Institute, moderated the discussion.

A recording of the briefing is available to [watch here](#).

### Remembering Philip Corfman and Linda Potter

Philip Corfman, an early member of the OCs OTC Working Group, passed away in late February. As the working group began discussions around the regulatory process to bring a birth control pill over the counter, Phil contributed a great deal of insights based on his former roles within the Food and Drug Administration. We are grateful for Phil's commitment to ensuring a full range of safe and effective contraceptive options and for his collaboration in the efforts of the working group.

Linda Potter, also an early member of the OCs OTC Working Group, passed away in early March. In addition to helping the working group compile early evidence to support an OTC birth control option, drawing from her own research on oral contraceptive adherence, Linda also collaborated on prototype labels for a future OTC progestin-only pill and combined oral contraceptive. We are grateful for Linda's devotion to family planning and to expanding our collective understanding of the safety and effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

### New Mexico contraceptive equity bill

New Mexico's [Health Coverage for Contraception Act](#) was signed by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham last week. This new law protects and expands upon the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive coverage guarantee, including coverage for vasectomies, a six-month supply, and coverage for OTC contraceptives such as emergency contraception, condoms, and a future OTC OC without requiring a prescription for that coverage to kick in. Consumers will not be subject to copays or cost sharing.

debbiearmstrong4nm.com: [Armstrong bill to ensure contraception access headed to governor's desk](#)

### Pharmacist prescribing legislation updates

#### Utah

Executive Director of the Utah Department of Health, Joseph Miner, has [issued a standing order](#) to allow pharmacists to dispense the pill, patch, and ring to women 18 and older following the bill being signed into law in March 2018. Pharmacists are required to undergo training in order to dispense these contraceptives.

*The Salt Lake Tribune*: [No prescription? No problem. New health department order will make it easier for Utah women to access birth control.](#)

*Deseret News*: [Why Utah women haven't been able to get birth control directly from pharmacists--yet](#)

#### West Virginia

West Virginia Governor Jim Justice recently [signed a bill into law](#) that will allow pharmacists to prescribe the pill, patch, and ring to women 18 and older under a standing prescription order. Pharmacists must undergo training in order to dispense these contraceptives. The law goes into effect June 7, 2019.

*WTRF.com*: [West Virginia Gov. Justice signs bills ahead of deadline](#)

## Media highlights

The *Des Moines Register's* editorial board voiced their support for an OTC birth control pill in a recent editorial, "[Women should not need any prescription for birth control pills.](#)"

*"No one should need a prescription for birth control pills. Women in countries all over the world do not need one. Instead of states creating a patchwork of policies, the Trump administration should put common sense and science over politics."*

## Statement of purpose sign-ons

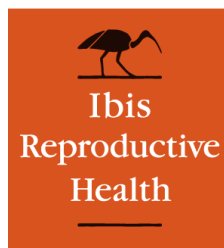
We are pleased to highlight the organizations that have recently signed onto our [statement of purpose](#). Please help us demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. [Email Mary](#) if you would like your organization to sign onto the statement of purpose.

[National LGBTQ Task Force](#)

## 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

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