



November 18, 2019

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Dear Working Group member,

In this update, we provide an exciting update on our collaboration with Advocates for Youth and their youth-led work as part of the Free the Pill campaign. We also invite you to join us **tomorrow, November 19 from 2-3pm ET** for a webinar, "Implementing over-the-counter contraceptive coverage in Maryland," with working group member Kimberly Sauer (NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland). [Register here!](#)

As a follow-up to the state advocate fish bowl at our recent OCs OTC Working Group annual meeting in Washington, DC, we are delighted to share EverThrive Illinois' contraceptive justice report and recommendations following a year-long research project of the Contraceptive Justice Coalition, convened by EverThrive IL.

Finally, we share an op-ed from one of our newest working group members, Rose Schnabel, a high school student, who describes why she's ready to fight for OTC access.

With gratitude,

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

Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

Launching a youth-led effort for the Free the Pill campaign with Advocates for Youth

A key tenet of our effort to free the pill is that people of all ages deserve the freedom to access the birth control method of their choice. Currently, young people face some of the greatest barriers to access. Young people should have the tools they need to take care of their health

and that's why we're so excited to be embarking on a youth-led campaign with working group partner [Advocates for Youth](#) to engage young people in building the case for and mobilizing their peers in support of OTC birth control pills without an age restriction. This partnership will involve campus organizing, youth spokesperson development, and social media outreach, as well as the launch of a newly formed [Youth Council](#) made up of youth activists from across the country who are working in their communities to bring birth control OTC and covered by insurance with no age restriction.

If you want to stay up to date with the #FreeThePill Youth Council, sign up for their updates and consider participating in their digital campaign [here!](#)

Implementing OTC contraceptive coverage in Maryland webinar

We invite you to join us for a webinar, "Implementing over-the-counter contraceptive coverage in Maryland," featuring working group member Kimberly Sauer, emergency contraception campaign manager at [NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland](#). Kimberly will provide an overview of their work on the implementation of Maryland's Contraceptive Equity Act (MCEA), which went into effect on January 1, 2018. Maryland was one of the first states to require coverage of OTC contraceptive medications, including emergency contraception, without a prescription. Kimberly will highlight barriers to implementation for accessing emergency contraception OTC, next steps in MCEA implementation, and how we can apply lessons learned to ensuring insurance coverage of future OTC birth control pills.

The webinar will take place **tomorrow, Tuesday, November 19 from 2-3pm ET**. [Register here!](#)

Contraceptive justice report and recommendations

[EverThrive Illinois](#), a working group member, is excited to share its [Contraceptive Justice Report!](#) This comprehensive landscape assessment, published in June 2019, evaluates access to all forms of contraception for people and communities at the individual, community, health care professional, and policy levels and draws on extensive research to examine the facilitators and barriers to comprehensive contraceptive and pregnancy prevention care in Illinois. This year-long research project of the [Contraceptive Justice Coalition](#), convened by EverThrive IL, resulted in a series of recommendations to increase contraceptive access and address disparities in health and health care related to race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, income, ability, immigration status, primary language, and geographic location.



Signing onto the statement of purpose

Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#)? Does your organization send a newsletter where you could share information about our work and Free the Pill? Please help us demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. [Email Mary](#) to let her know!

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

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