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Dear Working Group member,

2019 has certainly been an exciting year for our effort to bring the pill over the counter in the US! As I reflect on the progress we've made together, here are the **top 10 highlights** for me:

1. [New Mexico](#) and [New York](#) passed contraceptive equity bills and [Washington State's Reproductive Parity Act](#) went into effect, each expanding OTC birth control coverage.
2. Utah and West Virginia joined 10 other states and the District of Columbia in allowing [pharmacists to prescribe](#) certain hormonal contraceptives.
3. The [Affordability is Access Act](#), which would ensure a future OTC pill is covered by insurance, was introduced by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (D-MA).
4. More than 40 working group members visited with legislators in celebration of World Contraception Day to share the importance of insurance coverage for all FDA-approved methods of contraception, including future OTC birth control pills.
5. The [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#) called for the pill, patch, ring, and shot to be available over the counter, covered by insurance, and available to people of all ages.
6. We hosted five webinars with working group members highlighting work on topics like dual protection messaging with and for young people, and the potential impact of an OTC pill for the Native American community.
7. We gained 13 new [statement of purpose](#) sign-ons, bringing the strength of our coalition to more than 100 strong!
8. We welcomed six new people to our [steering committee](#), including four young people as part of

our new youth-adult partnership model, and [Jess Sanchez](#) joined the Free the Pill team as project assistant.

9. We launched a new collaboration with working group partner Advocates for Youth to [engage young people](#) in a youth-led campaign to advance the case for OTC access to the pill for people of all ages.
10. We held our inaugural [Free the Pill Day](#), a day of action to bring attention to the barriers to birth control access and demonstrate the widespread support for moving the pill OTC in the United States.

In this final update of 2019, we share an action you can take to get the #FreeThePill youth-led campaign off to a strong start as well as a new sexual and reproductive health app called Euki, informed by research from [Ibis Reproductive Health](#).

We also share a new fact sheet from the National Health Law Program on Medicaid coverage for OTC drugs, and the recording of our recent working group member webinar, "Implementing over-the-counter contraceptive coverage in Maryland," with Kimberly Sauer from NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland.

In closing, I'd like to thank you all for the drive and insight you bring to our coalition! We look forward to continuing to work with you in 2020 to advance and expand our efforts to free the pill!

Best wishes for the New Year,



Kate Grindlay Kelly
Project Director/Associate
Ibis Reproductive Health

#FreeThePill Youth Campaign Digital Action Toolkit now live

The #FreeThePill Youth Council, made up of 10 youth activists aged 17-22 from around the country to support the Free the Pill campaign and run in partnership with Advocates for Youth, is off and running and needs your help! [Sign up here to receive the Digital Toolkit](#) explaining the action youth organizers need help with this month. You can complete the action yourself in your local drug store, and also send around [the signup link](#) to people you know and

share it on your social media to help get more people participating in this important visibility campaign.

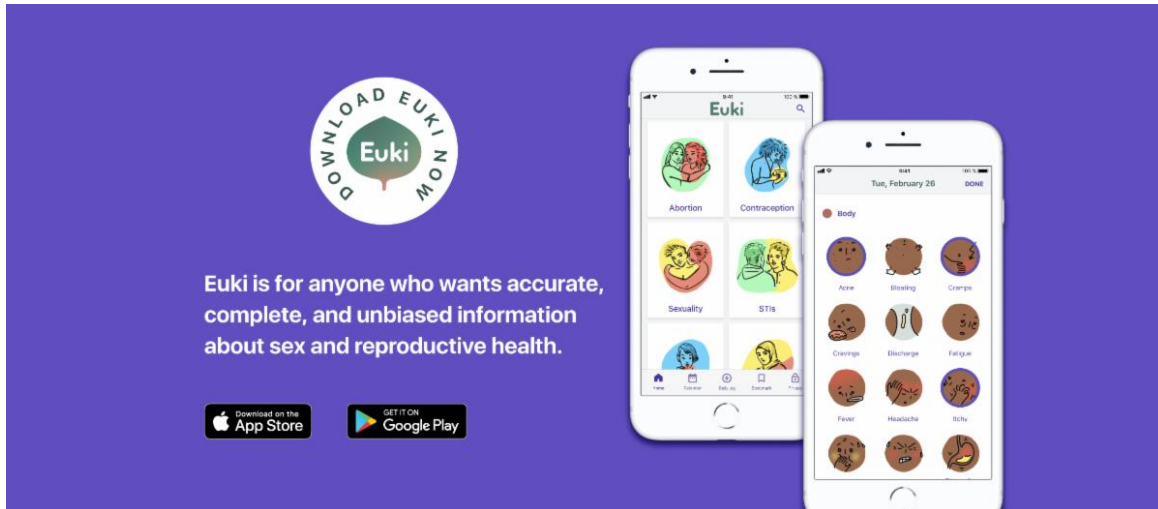


Introducing Euki, a new sexual and reproductive health app

We are excited to share [Euki](#), a new app that provides comprehensive information about sexual and reproductive health and tracking all in one place. Euki, informed by formative research [conducted by researchers at Ibis Reproductive Health](#), is for anyone with questions about sex or reproductive health, and has accurate, unbiased information about sexuality, contraception, STIs, abortion, miscarriage, and more. Euki's supportive, inclusive, and customizable interface doesn't make assumptions about who the user is or why they're using the app. Instead it allows users to customize the content and features to meet their unique needs. Euki also keeps privacy and security top of mind and only stores data on the user's phone, so only the user has access to their personal information and data. Users can also choose to protect the app with a password, and can even engage a feature to display a fake screen if someone were to force them to open the app. Anyone who has ever felt misunderstood or marginalized by the health care system and/or other sexual and reproductive health apps now has the tools and information they need to track what's going on with their bodies.

Click to Tweet about Euki!

[Excited to see @EukiApp, a secure app that lets you track your period, emotions, sex life, and more while learning about abortion, STIs, birth control, and sexuality: <http://eukiapp.org>](#)



New NHeLP fact sheet on Medicaid coverage of OTC drugs

The [National Health Law Program](#) (NHeLP), a working group member, recently released a new fact sheet, [Coverage of Over-the-Counter Drugs in Medicaid](#). As new, formerly prescription-only drugs have become available OTC over the past 20 years, e.g., allergy medications and emergency contraception (EC), some state Medicaid programs have adjusted their policies to cover more OTC products. State Medicaid programs can only receive federal Medicaid funds when OTC drugs are prescribed, but states can use their own funds to cover OTC drugs that are not prescribed. NHeLP summarizes from the [Kaiser Family Foundation's 2016 report](#) that eight states (Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, New York, Oregon, and Washington) report coverage of levonorgestral EC without requiring a prescription for some of their enrollees and at varying quantities. Further, eight states (Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oregon, and Texas) also reportedly cover additional forms of OTC contraceptives such as the male/external condom, female/internal condom, spermicide, and sponge with spermicide. Since that 2016 report, Delaware's contraceptive equity law also requires their Medicaid plan to cover levonorgestral EC without a prescription and Washington, DC's Medicaid coverage includes all OTC contraceptives, but prescription requirements are unclear.

Implementing OTC contraceptive coverage in Maryland webinar

Working group member Kimberly Sauer, emergency contraception campaign manager at [NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland](#), recently joined us for a webinar, "Implementing over-the-counter contraceptive coverage in Maryland," where she provided an overview of their work on the implementation of Maryland's Contraceptive Equity Act (MCEA). The webinar highlighted the barriers to implementation for accessing emergency contraception OTC, the next steps to MCEA implementation, and how we can apply lessons learned to ensuring insurance coverage of future OTC birth control pills. Mary Durden, senior policy and partnerships manager at Ibis Reproductive Health, also provided a history of our Free the Pill campaign and working group.

A [recording of this webinar](#) is now available.

Quick call to action

Share this image on social media showing you support the effort to #FreeThePill

[This holiday season \(and every season\), we're thinking about the positive impact an over-the-counter birth control pill will have in helping people access the birth control they need. Everyone deserves the freedom to plan for the future they want! #FreeThePill](#)



Signing onto the statement of purpose

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 Jess](#) if you would like your organization to sign-on!

[Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights \(COLOR\)](#)

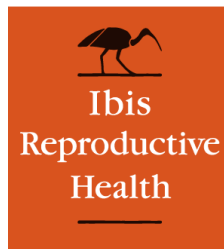
[Jane's Due Process](#)

[The Native American Community Board \(NACB\)](#)

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
2067 Massachusetts Ave, Suite 320
Cambridge, MA 02140
Tel.: 617-349-0040
Fax: 617-349-0041
Email: OCsOTC@ocsotc.org

www.OCsOTC.org

www.FreethePill.org

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