

April 3, 2020

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Dear Working Group member,

I hope you and your loved ones are doing well during this uncertain and trying time, and are finding strength and community in new ways in both your personal and professional lives.

Like many of your organizations, we are assessing the impact of COVID-19 on our work and sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice broadly. We are so grateful for our partners and for the work you all are doing to demonstrate that sexual and reproductive health care is essential health care, and that it is important for people to be able to access the care that they need, in times like this and always.

Indeed, the current moment underscores why we need an over-the-counter birth control pill now to ensure reproductive freedom and to put the ability to take care of our health and well-being into our own hands. While people are shopping for groceries and household items, they should be able to stock up on birth control pills as well. We hope you will join us **in making our message loud and clear during our digital week of action leading up to Free the Pill Day on May 9**. See below for more information and stay tuned for additional details in the weeks to come.

In this newsletter we also highlight resources relevant to the moment we are in, including our updated [online prescriber chart](#), an analysis of COVID-19 on sexual and reproductive health from the [Guttmacher Institute](#), and coronavirus resources from several working group partners. In addition, we share our updated Free the Pill [policy memo](#), recent media highlights, and a quick call to action.

During this unsettling time, I'm grateful for this coalition and the support, dedication, and fight you bring to the movement each and every day. On behalf of our entire Ibis Free the Pill team, we hope that you, your families, and your communities are staying safe and healthy.

In gratitude,



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

Free the Pill Day 2020

We are looking forward to May 9th, the second-annual Free the Pill Day, now, more than ever! Since May 9 falls on a Saturday this year, we will be holding a digital week of action leading up to the big day. During this week, we look forward to engaging with all of you to increase awareness and understanding of the benefits of OCs OTC and why an over-the-counter birth control pill is so important, particularly in this moment. We will be sending more information on Free the Pill Day soon!

Free the Pill resources

Many people are turning to online prescribers to have their birth control needs met during this time. We've updated our [online prescriber chart](#) to ensure it contains all the latest information, and hope you'll share with your networks.



We are excited to share our newly-redesigned [policy memo](#), which we first shared with you at our annual meeting in September. Thanks to ConwayStrategic, our communications firm, for the new design! Please share this memo with your colleagues and friends who would like to

learn more about the effort to bring a birth control pill OTC that is affordable, covered by insurance, and available to people of all ages.

Coronavirus resources

The Guttmacher Institute, a working group member, published an important piece about how the COVID-19 pandemic could affect sexual and reproductive health services, "[The COVID-19 Outbreak: Potential Fall for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights.](#)"

The National Health Law Program (NHeLP), National Women's Law Center (NWLC), and National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association (NFPRHA), all working group members, have compiled resources to help people address their health and economic needs in light of coronavirus.

- [Coronavirus Resources](#) from NHeLP
- [Coronavirus Response](#) from NWLC
- [Coronavirus Resource Hub](#) from NFPRHA

Please let us know of resources your organization has created that would be useful for working group members and their constituents.

Media highlights

Britt Wahlin, vice president of development and public affairs at Ibis Reproductive Health and working group steering committee member, spoke with [Vice](#) about why the COVID-19 pandemic is such an important example in highlighting the need for over-the-counter access to birth control pills.

"If people can't leave their homes or are being advised to avoid health clinics unless they're really sick, this is the moment that highlights why an over-the-counter birth control option would really help people overcome those barriers."

In [Rewire.News](#), Britt, as well as Dan Grossman, director of Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health and working group steering committee member, shared why the barriers of obtaining birth control are even harder during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Quick call to action

Click to Tweet:

[People in the US should be able to shop online or in person at their local pharmacy or grocery store and get the pill over the counter. It's important in an emergency, and always, to have access to the contraception you need. It's time to #FreeThePill](#)

Statement of purpose

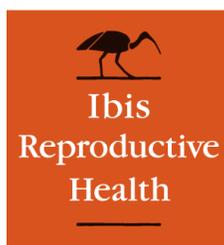
Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#)? Does your organization send a newsletter where you could share information about our work and Free the Pill? Please help us

demonstrate the wide support that exists for making OCs available OTC in the United States. Email [Jess](#) 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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