

Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Updates

March 31, 2021

Dear Working Group member,

With an FDA submission on the horizon, we're focused on conducting research critical to ensuring an OTC birth control environment that is just, equitable, and supportive. One of the studies we're working on is a follow-up to HRA's actual use trial—we're recruiting participants from the study to learn about their experiences using a progestin-only pill in a mock-OTC setting. In an online survey, we ask about their likelihood to continue using the product if it were available OTC as well as their willingness to pay for it. We also ask about information they'd want included with the product to help them make an informed decision about whether it's right for them.

And soon, we'll be launching a study in collaboration with working group partners that work with people of color and Indigenous communities to explore the contraceptive needs, desires, preferences, and experiences of Black, Indigenous, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Latina/Latinx people in the United States. We hope these findings can inform how our health systems can better meet the needs and desires of *all* people regarding contraceptive information and services.

We look forward to sharing the findings of these studies with you in the near future!

Warmly,

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

Carmela Zuniga
Project Manager

Condemn AAPI hate and violence

We are deeply saddened by the March 16 attacks in Georgia, which took the lives of eight people, including six Asian American women. In response to the violence, the **National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)**, a working group member, launched a petition demanding that elected officials respond to incidents of hate and violence toward the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community by centering Asian American women and elders, who are disproportionately impacted. We encourage you to **add your name to NAPAWF's petition** to condemn hate and violence against Asian American women and elders.

#FreeThePill Youth Council update



The #FreeThePill Youth Council is proud to announce that they'll be launching a virtual corner store for Free the Pill Day on May 9 (stay tuned for the official Free the Pill Day save the date)! Visitors to this online experience will finally be able to see what a corner store would look like in a world where birth control pills are made free, over the counter, and without age or

insurance limits! Members of the working group are invited to take a sneak peek of the virtual store and provide early feedback on the project by signing up [here](#). Details about giving feedback will be sent closer to the launch of the virtual store.

Support the #AdvancingRJ campaign

The #AdvancingRJ campaign is an eight-week public awareness and education campaign in Illinois to increase general public understanding of sexual and reproductive health care coverage and rights, and how Illinoisans can access the care they deserve. This campaign was created with the Contraceptive



Justice Coalition and the re.ad.just Coalition, both convened by working group member [EverThrive Illinois](#).

Visit the [campaign website](#) to find out how you can support the #AdvancingRJ campaign in connecting Illinoisans with the information and resources they need to navigate choosing their preferred contraceptive method, accessing abortion services, and more. Also, join the conversation on social media with hashtag #AdvancingRJ!

Policy updates

Maryland passed a bill repealing the state's prohibition on the sale of over-the-counter drugs in vending machines, and the bill is headed to the Governor's desk. This will help to broaden contraceptive access by allowing birth control such as OTC emergency contraception to be sold in vending machines. A bill allowing pharmacists to prescribe oral contraceptives was signed into law in **Arkansas**. Unfortunately, the bill limits pharmacists' prescribing authority to patients 18 and older. In **Colorado**, a bill was introduced that would include contraceptives for undocumented people through the state Medicaid program, and enable people who use Medicaid to receive a one-year supply of oral contraceptives.

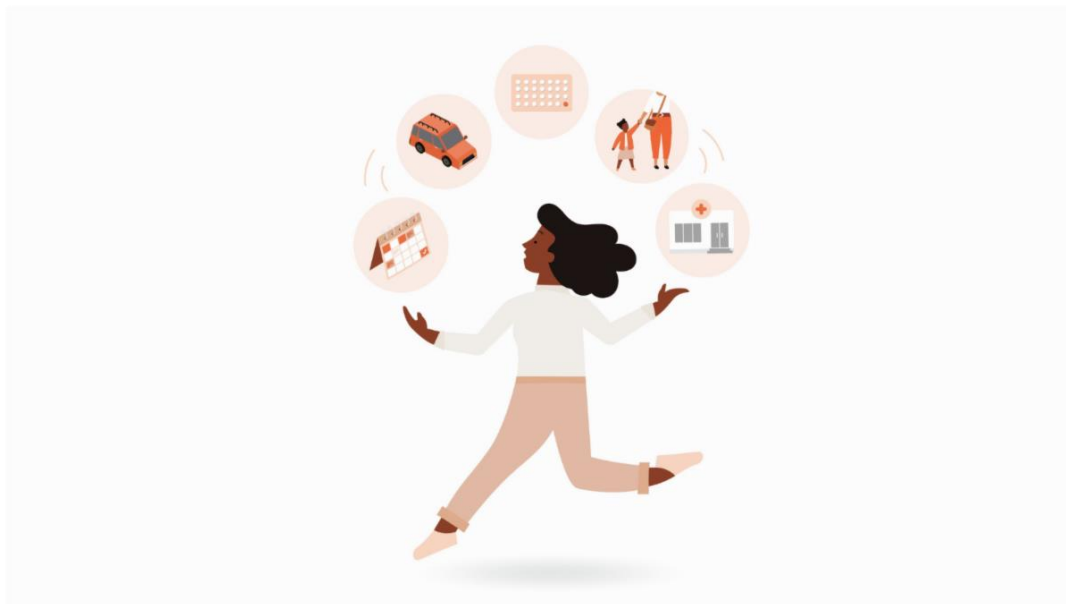
Media highlights

SB1082 increases access to contraception, empowers patients

An op-ed in the [Arizona Capitol Times](#) asserts how important legislation allowing pharmacist-prescribed birth control is to removing some barriers to hormonal birth control access. Research from working group members is cited to help make the case!

A quick call to action

Access to the #BirthControl of your choice shouldn't be an extra burden. It should be quick and easy, without needing to see your provider for a prescription. That's why we're working to #FreeThePill.



[Click to Tweet](#)

Resources and more

NWLC analysis

A [National Women's Law Center](#) analysis explains why age restrictions on birth control via pharmacy access are unnecessary and ineffective, highlighting evidence that they undermine—rather than protect—young people's safety, health, and wellness.

[Read Analysis](#)

Statement on racial justice

Online prescriber chart

Many people are turning to online prescribers to have their birth control needs met during this time. Our online prescriber chart has all the latest information. Please share it with your networks!

[View Chart](#)

Statement of purpose

Our coalition is more than 100 members strong! Has your organization

The OCs OTC Working Group Steering Committee is committed to fighting racial injustice and calling out systemic racism and inequities in sexual and reproductive health.

[Read the Statement](#)

[Sign On](#)

signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) yet?

[Sign On](#)

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 easier access to safe, effective, and affordable contraceptives, especially for those who currently face the greatest barriers, and support making birth control pills available over the counter. **Free the Pill** is the public-facing education campaign for the working group.

The working group is coordinated by **Ibis Reproductive Health**.

[Email Us](#)



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