



## Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group Updates

June 23, 2021

**Dear Working Group member,**

As you know, earlier this year Kate Grindlay Kelly, who served as Free the Pill Project Director, and Mary Durden, senior policy and partnerships manager, stepped down from their roles on the Free the Pill team. Over the past few months, we conducted a competitive search for a new project director who would bring policy, communications, and campaign experience and be able to take this project across the finish line of FDA approval of an OTC birth control pill in the United States.

I am thrilled to announce that we've found our new leader! Victoria Nichols will officially join the team as project director on June 28. Victoria brings a dynamic set of skills and public policy experience; she most recently led an initiative supporting a cohort of policy-focused grantees of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation committed to advancing health equity for children and families. I look forward to all of you getting to meet and work with Victoria. Please stay tuned for a welcome from Victoria in our July newsletter and thank you for all of your support during this time of transition!

Warmly,

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

## Save the date

Our annual working group meeting and World Contraception Day activities will once again be taking place virtually this fall. Please save the dates of **September 22 for our annual meeting and September 23 for our World Contraception Day activities**. Stay tuned for more details!

## #FreeThePill Youth Council update



The #FreeThePill Youth Council is wrapping up its year and heading into the summer! It is time to bid farewell to some of our beloved council members, but we are excited to welcome a new cohort of young activists fighting to free the pill later this year.

The [Free the Pill Virtual Store](#) remains open for visitors to learn about barriers to birth control access, earn merchandise, view #FreeThePill artwork, and take action to free the pill. The store allows visitors 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.

## Next OCs OTC research brown bag session

Join us for our next OCs OTC research brown bag session on **Thursday, July 29 from 12-1pm ET!** In this session, Maria Rodriguez, associate professor of obstetrics & gynecology at Oregon Health & Science University, will be discussing her work related to pharmacist provision of hormonal contraception. Stay tuned for an invite!

## Policy updates

Colorado passed [Senate Bill 9](#), which will provide contraceptive care to undocumented people through the state Medicaid program and allow anyone in the state who uses Medicaid to receive one year's supply of contraceptives. Working group partner [COLOR](#) (Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights) led the campaign in support of the bill, mobilizing organizations

and activists across the state. In addition, Nevada's [pharmacist prescribing bill](#) was signed into law. The bill authorizes pharmacists to dispense self-administered hormonal contraceptives under a standing order.

## Media highlights

### Keeping score: Reproductive health care on the line

*Ms. Magazine's* [biweekly roundup](#) featured a letter from young people, sponsored by [Advocates for Youth](#), to the Biden-Harris administration calling for OTC birth control pills that are covered by insurance and free of age restrictions.

### Over-the-counter birth control will give young people more control over their health

In *Prism*, Micaela Gaviola, a working group steering committee and #FreeThePill youth council member, highlights how OTC birth control pills would empower young people to have more autonomy over their own sexual and reproductive lives.

## A quick call to action

LGBTQ+ youth deserve comprehensive sex ed, HIV policy modernization, free & accessible testing, treatment, & PrEP! Our online prescriber chart lists where to find these SRH resources, in addition to birth control. Check it out! #queerNOW #FreeThePill <https://bit.ly/3coJRAo>

[Click to Tweet](#)

## Resources and more

### CECA's recommendations for contraceptive access

The Coalition to Expand Contraceptive Access (CECA) has released recommendations for the federal executive branch in expanding access to quality contraception.

### 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 Recommendations](#)

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## Statement on racial justice

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](#)

[View Chart](#)

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## Statement of purpose

Our coalition is more than 100 members strong! Has your organization signed onto our [statement of purpose](#) yet?

[Sign On](#)

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## 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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