

Free the Pill

Statement of purpose

Updated: May 9, 2022

The Free the Pill coalition (formerly the Oral Contraceptives Over-the-Counter Working Group) is a group of reproductive health, rights, and justice organizations, research and advocacy groups, youth activists, health care providers, prominent medical and health profession associations, and others who share a commitment to ensuring more equitable access to safe, effective, and affordable birth control to people of all ages, backgrounds, and identities in the United States. Our coalition is specifically focused on the potential of over-the-counter (OTC) birth control pills to help bridge gaps in access and give people greater control over their reproductive health and lives. **Coalition members support OTC birth control pills that are fully covered by insurance, affordable, available to people of all ages, and accessible to everyone who needs it in the United States.**

We recognize systemic racism and other forms of oppression as a root cause of contraceptive inequities, and that an intersectional and reproductive justice lens must be applied to our work to bring birth control pills OTC. **As such, the coalition is committed to reproductive justice values, applies a formal youth-adult partnership approach, and centers the leadership of those who face the greatest barriers to contraceptive care, and who could benefit the most from easier access to birth control pills.**

Since 2004, the coalition has worked to build the evidence in support of OTC birth control pills, demonstrating that they would be safe, effective, and appropriate for people of all ages, and meet the Food and Drug Administration's criteria for OTC status. Research shows that requiring a prescription makes it harder to obtain and consistently use birth control pills and there is no medical reason to obtain a prescription before starting, refilling, or switching birth control pills. Major medical associations including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American Medical Association, and the American Academy of Family Physicians, support OTC birth control pills for people of all ages. Making birth control pills available over the counter, and ensuring that they are priced affordably, covered by insurance, and accessible to people of all ages is an important step toward advancing health equity and reproductive justice.

Coalition commitments

To advance toward our shared goal of moving birth control pills over the counter in the United States, coalition members engage in a range of core activities that drive the Free the Pill campaign and movement. These activities include but are not limited to:

- Informing, conducting, and amplifying research to inform efforts to switch birth control pills from prescription status to OTC status for people of all ages, including the research that influences the drug development and regulatory processes
- Supporting policies that ensure young people have equal access to OTC contraceptives

- Advocating at the federal and state levels to expand both public and private insurance coverage of OTC contraception without a prescription and working to ensure that OTC birth control pills are affordable
- Ensuring measures are in place to guarantee OTC contraceptives are available on the shelf, and that an individual's religious or moral beliefs do not interfere with other people's access to contraception
- Engaging in regular convenings and meetings to build consensus on key issues in partnership with those who face the most barriers to access and will benefit the most from OTC birth control pills
- Engaging in public-facing education, discussions and actions to raise awareness and increase support for OTC birth control pills through our public opportunities and annual celebratory days including: Free the Pill Day (May 9) and World Contraception Day (September 26)

While the focus of our work is in the United States, we recognize that regulatory changes in the United States could have ramifications in other countries and for people outside of the United States who could benefit from easier access to birth control pills. Additionally, we can learn from the experiences of other countries where contraception is more demedicalized than in the United States, and will look to international experience to inform our efforts.

The coalition is open to health care providers, researchers, and advocates with direct work or interest in the issue. Employees of the pharmaceutical industry and FDA are welcome to join the group informally as individuals, although we will involve them in our activities at our discretion. The coalition's activities are guided by a steering committee composed of individuals from the research, health, and advocacy communities, as well as youth leaders. The work of the coalition has been funded by private foundations, government research grants, and in-kind contributions of coalition members. The coalition does not accept any contributions from pharmaceutical companies or manufacturers of birth control methods to support its meetings or advocacy and education efforts.

This statement was updated based on a previous version from 2016 and has been approved by the coalition's steering committee on May 9, 2022. This statement may be revised and updated as data and real-world experience on this topic accumulates.

Sign ons:

[Abortion Care Network](#)

[Adolescent Health Initiative](#)

[Advancing New Standards in Reproductive Health \(ANSIRH\)](#)

[Advocates for Youth](#)
[All-Options](#)
[American Academy of Nursing](#)
[American Academy of PAs](#)
[American Civil Liberties Union](#)
[American College of Clinical Pharmacy Women's Health Practice and Research Network](#)
[American College of Nurse-Midwives](#)
[American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#)
[American Nurses Association](#)
[American Sexual Health Association](#)
[American Society for Emergency Contraception](#)
[Association of Physician Assistants in Obstetrics & Gynecology](#)
[Association of Women's Health, Obstetric, and Neonatal Nurses \(AWHONN\)](#)
[Black Women for Wellness](#)
[Black Women's Health Imperative](#)
[Bold Futures](#)
[California Latinas for Reproductive Justice](#)
[California Women's Law Center](#)
[Catholics for Choice](#)
[Center for Biological Diversity](#)
[Center for Reproductive Rights](#)
[CHOICES. Memphis Center for Reproductive Health](#)
[Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights \(COLOR\)](#)
[Contraceptive Access Initiative \(CAI\)](#)
[DKT International](#)
[Doctors for America](#)
[EngenderHealth](#)
[Essential Access Health](#)
[ETR](#)
[EverThrive Illinois](#)
[Feminist Majority Foundation](#)
[FHI 360](#)
[Forward Together](#)
[Girls Inc.](#)
[Girls for Gender Equity](#)
[Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights \(GRR!\)](#)
[Guttmacher Institute](#)
[Gynuity Health Projects](#)
[Healthy Teen Network](#)
[Ibis Reproductive Health](#)
[If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice](#)
[Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health \(ICAH\)](#)

[Illinois Contraceptive Access Now \(ICAN!\)](#)
[In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda](#)
[Indigenous Women Rising](#)
[Ipas](#)
[Jacob's Institute of Women's Health](#)
[Jane's Due Process](#)
[John Snow, Inc.](#)
[Latino Commission on AIDS](#)
[Legal Voice](#)
[Medical Students for Choice](#)
[Michigan Organization on Adolescent Sexual Health](#)
[Mothering Justice](#)
[NARAL Pro-Choice America](#)
[NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland Fund](#)
[National Abortion Federation](#)
[National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum \(NAPAWF\)](#)
[National Center for Lesbian Rights](#)
[National Council of Jewish Women](#)
[National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association \(NFPRHA\)](#)
[National Health Law Program](#)
[National Hispanic Medical Association](#)
[National Institute for Reproductive Health](#)
[National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice](#)
[National LGBTQ Task Force](#)
[National Organization for Women](#)
[National Partnership for Women & Families](#)
[National Women's Health Network](#)
[National Women's Law Center](#)
[Native American Community Board \(NACB\)](#)
[New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute](#)
[North American Society for Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology](#)
[Northwest Health Law Associates](#)
[Nurses for Sexual and Reproductive Health](#)
[NY Birth Control Access Project](#)
[Pathfinder International](#)
[Physicians for Reproductive Health](#)
[Planned Parenthood Federation of America](#)
[Population Connection](#)
[Population Council](#)
[Positive Women's Network – USA](#)
[Power to Decide](#)
[Prosalud Interamericana Foundation](#)

[Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice](#)
[Reproaction](#)
[Reproductive Health Access Project](#)
[Rez Condom Tour](#)
[Rhia Ventures](#)
[Sexual Health and Reproductive Equity Program](#)
[SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change](#)
[SisterLove](#)
[SisterReach](#)
[SisterSong](#)
[Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine](#)
[Society of Family Planning](#)
[Society of General Internal Medicine](#)
[Society of General Internal Medicine – Women and Medicine Commission](#)
[SPARK Reproductive Justice Now!, Inc.](#)
[Training in Early Abortion for Comprehensive Healthcare](#)
[Upstream USA](#)
[URGE](#)
[Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health](#)
[Women’s Health Research Team](#)
[Women with a Vision](#)
[Woodhull Freedom Foundation](#)
[WREN](#)

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