

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 and the American Medical Association 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 Families Healthcare](#)
[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 \(AWHONN\)](#)
[Beyond the Pill](#)
[Black Women for Wellness](#)
[Black Women's Health Imperative](#)
[Bold Futures](#)
[California Latinas for Reproductive Justice](#)
[California Women's Law Center](#)
[Center for Biological Diversity](#)
[Center for Reproductive Rights](#)
[CENTRS Health](#)
[CHOICES. Memphis Center for Reproductive Health](#)
[Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights \(COLOR\)](#)
[Contraceptive Access Initiative \(CAI\)](#)
[Converge: Partners in Access](#)
[DKT International](#)
[Doctors for America](#)
[EngenderHealth](#)
[Essential Access Health](#)
[ETR](#)
[EverThrive Illinois](#)
[Feminist Majority Foundation](#)
[Forward Together](#)
[Girls for Gender Equity](#)
[Grandmothers for Reproductive Rights \(GRR!\)](#)
[Guttmacher Institute](#)
[Gynuity Health Projects](#)
[Healthy Teen Network](#)
[Ibis Reproductive Health](#)
[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](#)

[Jane Fonda Center](#)

[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 Birth Equity Collaborative](#)

[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 \(NACB\)](#)

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[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](#)

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[Power to Decide](#)
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[SisterLove](#)
[SisterReach](#)
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[Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine](#)
[Society of Family Planning](#)
[Society of General Internal Medicine](#)
[Society of General Internal Medicine – Women and Medicine Commission](#)
[Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine](#)
[SPARK Reproductive Justice Now!, Inc.](#)
[Training in Early Abortion for Comprehensive Healthcare](#)
[Upstream USA](#)
[URGE](#)
[Virginia League for Planned Parenthood](#)
[Wisconsin Alliance for Women’s Health](#)
[Women’s Bar Association of the District of Columbia](#)
[Women’s Health Research Team](#)
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Katie Adamek, MPH, Researcher, Mathematica

Eli Y. Adashi, MD, MS, CPE, FACOG, Brown University

Elisabeth Aubeny, Medical Gynaecologist, President of French Association for Contraception

Sandra Azancot, BS

Lynn Borgatta, MD, MPH, Department of OB/GYN, Boston Medical Center

Anne Burke, MD, MPH, FACOG, Johns Hopkins University

Nicole Chaisson, Family Physician, University of Minnesota

Carolyn Curry, Adolescent Fellow Physician, Indiana University School of Medicine

Reia Chapman, MSW, LISW-CP, LCSW, Center for Family & Maternal Wellness

Sima Michaels Dembo, SMD Health Consulting

Marian Evans, MD, MPH, CRA, Assistant Professor, Southern CT State University

Beth Fredrick, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Jenn French, Attorney

Richard A. Grossman, MD, MPH

Edith Guilbert, MD, MSc, Clinical Professor, Department of OB/GYN, Laval University, Quebec, Canada

Cynthia C. Harper, PhD, Bixby Center for Global Reproductive Health, UCSF

Kathleen Hill-Besinque, PharmD, FASHP, USC School of Pharmacy

David Howard, MD, PhD, Department of OB/GYN, University of Missouri-Kansas City

Julie Komarow, MD, Sound Family Medicine, Washington State Medical Association

Ali Kubba, FRCOG, FFSRH

Sarah Lynch, Clinical Associate Professor of Pharmacy Practice, Binghamton University School of Pharmacy

Marjorie Macieira, MA, Macieira Consulting, LLC

Shawn Malarcher

Marieme Mbaye, MD, OBGYN, Booked with Dr. Mare

Jennifer McIntosh, PharmD, MHS

Nat Metz, FNP, Metz Healthcare

Susan Milstein, PhD, MCHES, Milstein Health Consulting

Tony Ogburn, MD, Department of OB/GYN, University of New Mexico

Sedef Onder, Founder, CLEAR Inc.

Heather Paladine, MD, MEd, FAAFP, Assistant Professor of Medicine, Center for Family and Community Medicine Columbia University Medical Center

Kelly Palm, FNP-C, Director of Westfield State University Health Services

Rachel Perry, MD, MPH, Assistant Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of California, Irvine

Kathryn Phillips, PhD, UCSF

Joseph E. Potter, PhD, Population Research Center, University of Texas at Austin

Heather Prescott, PhD, Department of History at Central Connecticut State University

Ryan Pryor, Certified Nurse Midwife Family Nurse Practitioner, Mass General Brigham

Sally Rafie, PharmD

Francisco T. Rivas, Esq.

Susan Rubin, MD, Family Physician, Institute for Family Health

Eleanor Bimla Schwarz, MD, MS, Associate Professor of Medicine, Epidemiology, Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences, University of Pittsburgh

Kunal Sindhu

Summer Starling, DrPH MPH, Founder & Principal, Starling Consulting Group, Inc.

Lisa M. Stone, Executive Director, Legal Voice

John Townsend, Chair, Rotary Action Group on Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health

James Trussell, PhD, Office of Population Research, Princeton University

Becky Twamley, RPh

Andrea Westby, MD, Broadway Family Medicine

Ellen Wiebe, MD, Medical Director, Willow Women's Clinic; Clinical Professor, University of BC

Lisa Wynn, PhD, School of Social Sciences, Macquarie University

Matthew Young, Harvard Medical School