

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 4, 2023

Taylor Carroll (taylor@caminoopr.com or 804-396-9658)

Momentum builds for affordable over-the-counter birth control

The Contraceptive Access Initiative launches a six-figure, first-ever ad campaign to push for affordable over-the-counter contraception for all

WASHINGTON — Following the approval of the first over-the-counter birth control pill and an [executive order](#) by President Biden instructing agencies to consider new ways to bolster affordable contraceptive access, three agencies are considering implementing insurance coverage for over-the-counter birth control. Today, December 4, 2023, marks the end of the tri-agency [request for information](#) (RFI) for over-the-counter insurance coverage.

Coinciding with the tri-agency review, the Contraceptive Access Initiative (CAI) has launched the first ad campaign to raise awareness about the roadmap to affordability for over-the-counter contraception, focused on Washington D.C. decision-makers. CAI has also launched a [dedicated web page](#) to track progress on affordability.

A major pillar of the roadmap is offering public and private insurance coverage for over-the-counter contraception, including the contraceptive pill when obtained without a prescription. [Seventy-one percent of likely voters support requiring insurers to cover the cost of OTC birth control pills.](#) This includes majorities across Democrats, Independents and Republicans. Much of this reform can be achieved at the agency level and with implementation tweaks to the Affordable Care Act.

“Requiring insurance to cover the same over-the-counter birth control that has been covered by prescription is an easy fix that could significantly expand contraceptive access,” said Dana Singiser, co-founder of the Contraceptive Access Initiative (CAI). “Birth control pills for sale on store shelves will not fully expand access unless we also ensure it is affordable.”

The RFI is an important step toward securing insurance coverage of the birth control pill, and comes on the heels of President Biden’s executive order, “Strengthening Access to Affordable, High-Quality Contraception and Family Planning Services.” Signed in June of this year, [the order](#) suggests that access to contraception and family planning services should be expanded.

“We commend the Biden administration for signaling a strong commitment to health equity with its exploration of insurance coverage for over-the-counter products,” said Singiser. “There’s a steady drumbeat of action toward finally making the pill affordable for all.”

In July of this year, the Food and Drug Administration approved [Opill](#) as the first daily oral contraceptive available without a prescription. Opill, a progestin-only “mini-pill,” is expected on store shelves in early 2024. A [second](#) form of the birth control pill, used by 90% of pill users, is still making its way through the FDA process. The full range of prescription oral contraceptive pills includes both a progestin-only oral contraceptive pill (“POP”) like Opill and also a combination oral contraception (“COC”). For the over-the-counter market to be complete, both pills must be available.

“As a practicing OB-GYN, I know firsthand that being able to access birth control is instrumental to the health and safety of patients,” said Dr. Raegan McDonald-Mosley, chief medical advisor at the Contraceptive Access Initiative and chief executive officer at Power to Decide. “It is past time to remove unnecessary barriers to contraceptive pills and prioritize reproductive equity.”

CAI is implementing a public awareness campaign to continue to build support for making birth control more affordable. The organization launched a six-figure advertising campaign, with ads in Politico and The Hill. These are the first ads ever in support of insurance coverage of OTC birth control.

“We expect real change to result from the administration’s efforts,” said Singiser. “Expanding access to contraception improves health outcomes and empowers people’s autonomy and ability to control their lives.”

Resources:

- Information about affordability of the pill OTC and a roadmap to affordability is [here](#), and a white paper on private health plans is [here](#).
- RFI submissions:
 - CAI’s submission to the tri-agency RFI is [here](#).
 - The Family Planning Coalition submission is [here](#), including 28 groups.
 - The [Free the Pill](#) coalition has also submitted comments.
- A congressional letter to the Department of Defense on contraceptive affordability is [here](#).
- Details about the pill over-the-counter are [here](#).
- A letter from 48 senators urging a requirement to cover OTC contraception is [here](#).

###

The nonprofit Contraceptive Access Initiative advocates for increasing access to contraception, free from stigma, bias and coercion. CAI supports affordable over-the-counter access to oral contraception without

CONTRACEPTIVE ACCESS INITIATIVE

restrictions. Our work reduces misinformation and challenges disinformation while uplifting educational content that helps people make the choices that are right for them. Follow CAI on Twitter [@ThePillOTC](#) and on [LinkedIn](#).