March 7, 2022

Dear Dr. Califf:

Congratulations on your appointment as Commissioner of Food and Drugs. We look forward to working with you in your new role.

As you may know, over-the-counter oral contraceptives (OCs) will be a key issue on FDA’s agenda this year. You are taking the helm at a time when FDA is evaluating two oral contraceptive products seeking over-the-counter status. As Members of Congress who have long been leaders on reproductive rights and justice issues, we ask for your ongoing commitment to advance public health and follow the science and data in all decisions, including the timely review of the oral contraception applications and the evidence regarding its safety and efficacy.

This is a critical issue for reproductive health, rights, and justice. Despite decades of proven safety and effectiveness, people still face immense barriers to getting birth control due to systemic inequities in our healthcare system. These barriers are disproportionately borne by people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, low-income individuals, young people, and people in rural communities – individuals who have faced and continue to face the greatest inequities. FDA has an important role to play in removing unnecessary barriers to provide individuals greater control over their reproductive lives and health.

Birth control pills are one of the most studied medicines on the market today and they meet FDA’s standards for over-the-counter status. Additionally, evidence supports the safety and benefits of over-the-counter birth control pills with no age restriction, and adolescent sexual and reproductive health experts support access for people of all ages. The pill is safe: the prevalence of contraindications is low for all people, and in many cases, lower for young people.

Over-the-counter birth control pills are widely supported by health care providers and the general public for all people of reproductive age. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists supports over-the-counter access to hormonal contraception without age restrictions. Medical organizations including the American Academy of Family Physicians support making birth control pills available over the counter as safe, effective, and beneficial to overall health and well-being. There is broad public support as well – 70% of women of reproductive age are in favor of making birth control available over the counter without a prescription.
This year poses a significant opportunity to ensure that FDA prioritizes science over politics, particularly when it comes to reproductive health. We were encouraged to hear your commitment to following the science during your December 14, 2021 hearing in the Senate HELP Committee. We urge FDA to review applications for over-the-counter birth control pills without delay and based solely on the data and defend against political interference during the review processes. The health and well-being of people capable of pregnancy across America is at stake.

Again, we congratulate you on your new role as Commissioner and look forward to working with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Pro-Choice Caucus

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

/s/
Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

/s/
Karen Bass
Member of Congress

/s/
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

/s/
Katherine Clark
Member of Congress

/s/
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

/s/
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress
Co-Chair, Pro-Choice Caucus

/s/
Judy Chu
Member of Congress

/s/
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

/s/
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

/s/
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

/s/
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Lois Frankel
Member of Congress

Kaiali‘i Kahele
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

Marie Newman
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Kathy Manning
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress
/s/ Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

/s/ Katie Porter
Member of Congress

/s/ Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

/s/ Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/ Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

/s/ Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velazquez
Member of Congress

/s/ Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

/s/ John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/ Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

/s/ Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

/s/ Albio Sires
Member of Congress

/s/ Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone
Member of Congress

/s/ Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

/s/ Nikema Williams
Member of Congress
i OCs OTC Working Group. July 2015. OCs Moving the birth control pill over the counter in the United States. See [here](#).


v Kaiser Family Foundation. April 2021. Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Services: Key Findings from the 2020 KFF Women's Health Survey. Available [here](#).