



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 20, 2025

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee
241 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill (HB) 939 – Maryland Commission for Women - Maryland Collaborative to Advance Implementation of Coverage of Over-the-Counter Birth Control – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 939– Maryland Commission for Women - Maryland Collaborative to Advance Implementation of Coverage of Over-the-Counter Birth Control. HB 939 requires the Maryland Commission for Women to establish the Maryland Collaborative to Advance Implementation of Coverage of Over-the-Counter Birth Control to study access to over-the-counter birth control; and requires the Collaborative to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

In July 2023, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Opill, the first daily oral contraceptive available over-the-counter (OTC) without requiring a prescription.¹ The approval of Opill marked a significant step in increasing access to contraception and empowering individuals to make reproductive health choices more independently.

Improving coverage of OTC birth control aligns with the Department’s Women’s Health Action Plan² goal of protecting reproductive rights and expanding access to reproductive health services. To further this goal, the Department supports the establishment of the consumer-focused implementation Collaborative that will help facilitate widespread access to OTC birth control.

HB 939 would have a positive impact on low-income individuals, people of color, and uninsured individuals, who often face greater financial and systemic barriers to accessing contraception. By advancing the implementation of coverage for over-the-counter birth control, the bill helps ensure more equitable access to reproductive healthcare.

¹ FDA Approves First Nonprescription Daily Oral Contraceptive. Food & Drug Administration. July 13, 2023. <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-approves-first-nonprescription-daily-oral-contraceptive>

² MDH Womens’ Health Action Plan. <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/mch/Pages/Womens-Health-Action-Plan.aspx>

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Scott", is enclosed within a faint, light-blue outline of the state of Maryland.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary