

September 2023 Newsletter

A Note from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Access to the full range of birth control options, as well as to abortion, are non-negotiable aspects of our reproductive and sexual health. The legal, financial, and practical barriers to birth control constrain our human rights in much the same way as abortion bans, and are directly related.

Everyone who can get pregnant has cause for alarm about our access to birth control. Yet in the midst of the U.S. rollback of rights, we also have cause for celebration. Culminating 20 years of feminist activism, **the FDA has approved the first ever over the counter (OTC) birth control pill in US history.**



While this is a huge victory, we also need trustworthy information about our options so that we can choose the forms of contraception that work best for us. Our Bodies Ourselves Today has everything that you need to know about birth control as well as important information concerning what to do when contraception fails. More than half of all U.S. pregnancies are unplanned, and each of us has the right to decide whether to continue a pregnancy based on what we believe is best for our own unique situation.

This newsletter introduces **our fantastic new Program Director, Dr. Laura Prieto**. We also raise the much-neglected topic of sterilization as birth control, introduce one of our esteemed contraception and abortion experts, and share a recent event we took part in. We're so glad you're here with us fighting for the sexual and reproductive rights of women, girls, and everyone who can become pregnant.

Onward!
Amy Agigian

Introducing Our New Program Director

Hello everyone! I'm Laura R. Prieto (she/ella) and I'm thrilled to join Our Bodies Ourselves Today as its new Program Director. I'll be a Scholar in Residence as well at Suffolk University's Center for Women's Health and Human Rights.



I am a longtime educator and public humanist. The first in my family to earn a university degree, I am an alum of Wellesley College and I have a Ph.D. in History from Brown University. I focus on transnational, intersectional women's history, gender, and sexuality studies. I've led academic departments and public initiatives before, including the ongoing **Mary Eliza Project**. My favorite endeavors are those like OBOS Today that make space for creativity, collaboration, and mentorship.

Growing up bilingual fostered my love of learning languages. I've visited 34 states and 19 countries so far, and hope to keep traveling in the future. I also enjoy writing, cooking, museum hopping, walking, and urban photography. I'm always reading (or listening to) at least one book, which could be anything from poetry to sci-fi to academic scholarship. You can read more about me and my work on [my website](#).

I feel honored to carry forward the global feminist legacy of *Our Bodies Ourselves*, with its message that sharing knowledge is empowering. I look forward to strengthening the sense of community around OBOS Today, expanding its content and reach, and connecting us to reliable information and vital activism, past and present. I'm excited to help continue OBOS Today's timely – and much needed – mission!

Photo: Michael J. Clarke / Suffolk University

Featured Resource

Sterilization as a Form of Contraception

Sterilization procedures are extremely effective, permanent methods of birth control, which makes it even more maddening that **physicians often consider them inappropriate for young women who have never had children and know we don't want them**. Yet sterilization has all too often been imposed on women who don't want it; forced and **coerced sterilization has a long and shameful history in the USA**. This FAQ answers common questions about tubal sterilization and vasectomies, including their effectiveness, whether they can be reversed, and their relative risks.



[Read More About Sterilization for Women and Men](#)

Contraception and Abortion Content Expert



Meet Angel M. Foster, DPhil, MD, AM

Dr. Angel M. Foster is a Professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa. She holds a doctorate from the University of Oxford in Middle Eastern Studies, an MD from Harvard Medical School, and both master's and bachelor's degrees from Stanford University. Dr. Foster is a global abortion researcher and leads projects in 22 countries in Asia, Africa,

Europe, the Middle East, and North America. She has authored more than 100 articles and co-edited three books; she also led the most recent revision of the Inter-Agency Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings.

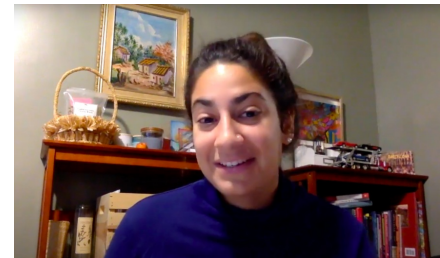
Dr. Foster serves as the Chair of the Board of Directors of the National Abortion Federation Canada, Co-Chair of the Safe Abortion Care Sub-Working Group of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises (IAWG), and Editor-in-Chief of "Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health." She received the Guttmacher Institute's 2017 Darroch Award for Excellence in Sexual and Reproductive Health Research and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality's 2018 Public Service Award. In 2023, Dr. Foster was inducted into the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences.

[Learn More About Angel](#)

Featured Personal Story

Dealing with Pain from an IUD

SD shares about her experience trying a copper IUD and experiencing severe pain and heavy periods. She discusses switching to a natural family planning method after getting the IUD removed. This story is one example of how even a highly effective form of birth control, such as the IUD, isn't right for everyone.



[Watch This Story](#)

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Our Bodies Ourselves Today in the News



Women's Equality Day 2023

On Tuesday, August 22, 2023, Our Bodies Ourselves Today had the privilege of partnering with Suffrage 100 Massachusetts and the City of Boston's Office of Women's Advancement for Women's Equality Day 2023: Women's Health and Maternal Health Crisis for Women of Color. The

event addressed critical issues in health care for women, recognized the pioneering legacy of Our Bodies Ourselves and the current work of Our Bodies Ourselves Today, and responded to the immediate emergency in maternal health care for women.

Photo Credit: Axie Breen Photography

[See More about Women's Equality Day](#)

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