**Sample Op-Ed or Blog and General Tips**

**[Identify personal connection to primary message: More than 400,000 women in Virginia live in contraceptive deserts]**

* Women are struggling financially and barriers to access contraception further limit their resources and their ability to live life on their own terms.

**[Explain contraceptive deserts in Virginia]**

* An estimated [407,310 women](https://powertodecide.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/State%20Factsheet_Virginia.pdf) living at or below 250% of the poverty level in Virginia live in contraceptive deserts, counties in which there is not reasonable access to a health center offering the full range of contraceptive methods.
* This means women struggling to make ends meet must incur additional costs such as transportation, child care, and taking unpaid time from work just to get the type of contraception they need. **[Add local story or example if possible].**
* Across the country, more than 19 million U.S. women in need live in [contraceptive deserts](https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/access/birth-control-access).

**[Proactive steps taken by Virginia to expand access to contraception]**

* Virginia has expanded Medicaid to childless adults, and by extension, given them contraceptive coverage.
* Virginia requires insurance coverage for an extended supply of prescription contraception.

**[Virginia could take the following additional steps]**

* Enact state policies that allow pharmacists to prescribe contraception.
* Protect contraceptive coverage for the full range of methods.

**[Conclusion – Sample ideas below]**

* More than [400,000 women](https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/resource-library/contraceptive-access-virginia) in need in Virginia are faced with undue barriers to accessing the contraception they need and deserve.
* Women in Virginia who live in contraceptive deserts face costs for transportation, child care and taking unpaid time off from work just to access basic health care.
* Virginia has taken significant steps to reduce the burden barriers through policies such as Medicaid expansion for childless adults and requiring insurance to cover an extended supply of contraception but there is more work to be done.
* Virginia could enact state policies that allow pharmacists to prescribe contraception and protect contraceptive coverage for the full range of methods.
* Expanding access to contraception is important in Virginia in order to help the more than [400,000 women in need](https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/resource-library/contraceptive-access-virginia) currently living in contraceptive deserts, and so many others who are striving to achieve their educational, career, economic, and family goals.
* Birth control has widespread support. For one, nearly all women (99%) who have ever had sex with men [have used contraceptives at some point in their lives](https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/resource-library/everyone-loves-birth-control).
* [The majority of adults (76%)*,*](https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/resource-library/survey-says-thxbirthcontrol-november-2019) believe that birth control is a basic part of women’s health care. Further, 86% of adults, support access to all birth control methods, with broad support [regardless of race, region, and political affiliation](https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/resource-library/survey-says-thxbirthcontrol-november-2019).
* Access to contraception is more important than ever.
* COVID-19 is putting front and center the need for women to be able to access birth control in a variety of ways.
* COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the health and economic security of people nationwide.
* The pandemic has also changed our approach to health care and highlights the opportunity to deliver access to care in innovative ways.
* We hope these innovative methods to deliver medical care will become established practice across the country and thus make it easier for women to access the birth control they need and deserve.