

Dear Member of Congress:

I am writing to urge your support for the “Women’s Health Office Act” (H.R. 4354/S. 1304), a bill that was introduced in the House by Representatives Carolyn Maloney and Deborah Pryce and in the Senate by Senators Olympia Snowe and Barbara Mikulski. This legislation would provide permanent authorization for offices of women’s health throughout the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The offices and positions in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) conduct a vast array of critical programs and services to improve the health of women throughout the nation.

For example, the CDC is conducting research and disseminating information on quality of life and disease and disability prevention. The FDA is analyzing data for sex and gender differences; improving drug labeling; and working to eliminate disparities in drug, device, and biologics testing and policy. The AHRQ is leading the way to improve health care quality and outcomes of care for women through research and education. These examples illustrate the diversity and critical importance of the work of the women’s health offices throughout HHS.

Much work, however, remains to be done to improve the health of the women of our country. We still have a long way to go to fully understand diseases and conditions which are unique to women, such as ovarian and cervical cancer, endometriosis, and post-partum disorders. We also need a better understanding of why certain diseases impact women and men differently. Finally, we need to improve our knowledge of disorders and conditions such as depression, breast cancer, migraines, osteoporosis, and various autoimmune diseases such as lupus, which are more prevalent in women than they are in men.

The best way to ensure the future of women’s health is to ensure the future of the women’s health offices and positions throughout HHS. Currently, these offices do not have permanent authorization, which means they are subject to being underfunded, understaffed, or eliminated in the future. The “Women’s Health Office Act” would permanently authorize these offices and secure appropriate funding for them for the next several years. Passage of this legislation is critical to ensuring that the women’s health offices throughout HHS will be able to continue their vitally important work for years to come.

We therefore urge you to support the “Women’s Health Office Act” by your co-sponsorship and ultimately your vote. We greatly appreciate your leadership on this issue vital to the health of women and their families.

Sincerely,

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