

Coalition for **WOMEN'S HEALTH EQUITY**

March 15, 2019

Dear Members of Congress,

Congratulations on starting your service as a Member of the 116th Congress. As you face the challenges and opportunities ahead, the Coalition for Women's Health Equity stands ready to help you address them.

The undersigned organizations are part of a broad coalition committed to advocating for equity in women's health, including illness and disease prevention, research, program funding, access to and quality of care; and to raising awareness about how health inequities adversely affect women and families throughout the United States. We believe that health equity can be achieved, but more must be done to address the disparities that put women at risk for misdiagnosis, ineffective treatments, and compromised care. A lack of women's health equity impacts the well-being of women now and for generations to come.

The coalition envisions an American health system that anticipates and prioritizes women's unique health needs and optimizes women's health outcomes. We strive for a future where:

- Women are empowered to advocate for their health – as patients and consumers – and to have their symptoms and concerns valued and validated.
- Women's wellness is prioritized through health education, preventive services, social supports, and a safe and healthy environment.
- Women have access to high-quality care and benefit from a well-coordinated healthcare system.
- Women's unique physical and mental health needs – shaped by sex/gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, sexual orientation, and gender identity— are thoroughly studied and addressed throughout their lifespan,
- Women receive data-driven, evidence-based care.

Women’s survival rates and quality of life are affected by their access to preventive services and effective treatment options. In order to create an equitable healthcare system, we must prioritize cultural competence – recognizing the diversity of women and promoting women’s agency and empowerment throughout their continuum of care. Health equity must center the needs of women of color who, after generations of systemic barriers, face unique obstacles that negatively impact their health outcomes and interactions with the healthcare system. Toxic chemical exposures – from consumer products, occupational settings and place-based exposures – negatively impact women’s health and contribute to an increased risk of disease.

An effective system will seek to incorporate cross-sector strategies, including public and private investments in research; the education of health care professionals and consumers; and government and business-driven policies that promote employee safety, health, and wellness.

We hope to collaborate with you on these issues and would be happy to answer any questions you have about women’s health equity or the Coalition. Thank you for your consideration of this letter and, again, congratulations.

Alliance for Aging Research
Alzheimer’s Foundation of America
American Heart Association
American Medical Women’s Association
Black Women’s Health Imperative
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
Brem Foundation
Hadassah, The Women’s Zionist Organization of America, Inc.
HealthyWomen
Jewish Women International
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health
National Council of Jewish Women
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women’s Law Center
National Women’s Political Caucus
Open Medicine Foundation
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Preeclampsia Foundation
SCAD Alliance (spontaneous coronary artery dissection)
The Shane Foundation
Solve ME/CFS Initiative
WomenAgainstAlzheimer’s
WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease