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April 29, 2015

The Honorable Jim Cooper
U.S. House of Representatives
1536 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Cooper:

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, is proud to offer its endorsement of the Research for All Act, which represents a critical step toward ensuring effective, non-discriminatory medical research. Gender disparity in medical research is a major priority for Hadassah and central to our domestic advocacy agenda. We plan to mobilize our 330,000 members, associates, and supporters—found in every Congressional district—to educate U.S. legislators and the American public about this issue, and help promote solutions like the Research for All Act which will guarantee that biomedical research is sensitive to gender disparities and benefits women and men equally.

Throughout our 100-plus years of history, Hadassah has been at the forefront of some of the most important debates related to health research. Our Hadassah Medical Organization in Israel conducts state-of-the-art medical research and provides patients from around the world with the highest-quality care available. We are heartened that the last two decades have seen tremendous progress toward gender equity, particularly in late-stage clinical trials. Yet foundational, early-stage medical studies still tend to use more male animals, or fail to take sex differences into consideration at all.

We are alarmed that there is little information available about the effects of drugs and therapies on women. There is also insufficient knowledge around diagnoses; in fact, a multitude of diseases are often misdiagnosed or overlooked entirely in women, including heart disease, which is the number one killer of women in the U.S. We are keenly aware of this challenge which is addressed in our Every Beat Counts: Hadassah's Heart Health Program, educating women throughout the United States on the unique symptoms of women's heart disease.

Gender differences in health are especially pressing, given that it can take 15 to 20 years for practice to incorporate research findings, according to an Institute of Medicine report commissioned by Congress.

Hadassah was pleased with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) plan to require grantees to outline plans for balancing male and female cells and animals in preclinical studies. Similarly, we are pleased to see that the Research for All Act directs the NIH to include separate analysis of both male and female animals, tissues and cells in basic research while also requiring the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to adhere to stricter gender requirements in clinical drug trials for expedited drug products. In doing so, your legislation can positively impact the health of women, families and communities throughout the U.S. and around the world.

The bipartisan Research for All Act calls attention to the fact that more must be done to improve gender equity in all medical research. Hadassah's members, associates, and supporters thank you for your continued leadership on this issue, and look forward to working with you to achieve gender-balanced medical research and improve health outcomes for both women and men.

Sincerely,



Marcie Natan
Hadassah National President