

Women's Health

Update



Winter 2007

Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction, Ohio Department of Health

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Update Focus: Why Women's Health?

Letter from Debra Seltzer

In anticipation of writing this article, I looked up notable quotes about change (there are quite a lot of them). The ones I picked:

"After you've done a thing the same way for two years, look it over carefully. After five years, look at it with suspicion. And after 10 years, throw it away and start all over."

~Alfred Edward Perlman, *New York Times*, 3 July 1958

"Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights."

~Pauline R. Kezer

"I put a dollar in one of those change machines. Nothing changed."

~George Carlin

OK, the last one I just thought was funny. But the first two really interest me. I love the combination advocated by Pauline Kezer, that we honor continuity and build on our past, but set our focus on the change that takes us to new places. I am not sure I agree with Alfred Edward Perlman's conclusion to throw things away after 10 years, but I do respect the forcefulness with which he champions change. It makes me think of the concept of "Chi," "the circulating life energy that in Chinese philosophy is thought to be inherent in all things" and the idea that keeping things moving opens the way for new possibilities.

Last year we celebrated 20 years of Women's Health Month in Ohio. In recent years, most of the country, under the leadership

of the Office on Women's Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has been celebrating Women's Health Week every May (beginning with Mother's Day weekend). In order to better coordinate our efforts and take advantage of national leadership for Women's Health Week, we have decided 2007 will be the last year we will celebrate Women's Health Month in September. Beginning in spring 2008, we will instead sponsor an Ohio Women's Health Week in May. We will work together with all our Ohio partners to ensure a smooth transition and look forward to the new opportunities this change will bring.

Other changes we are facing within our unit at the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) include a major shift toward primary prevention in our sexual assault work, and expansion

to include the Injury Prevention Program as a part of our unit under a broad new heading of Injury and Violence Prevention. We have also been working with other women's health programs throughout ODH to better coordinate our services and plan to highlight the women's health

resources of our department as a part of the celebration of Women's Health Month in Ohio to be held in September 2007. More on that will follow this summer; meanwhile, we look forward to working with all of our readers as we continue to build on successful women's health service provision in Ohio!

“Continuity gives us roots; change gives us branches, letting us stretch and grow and reach new heights.”
~Pauline R. Kezer

Debra Seltzer

Program Administrator

Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Prevention Program (SADVPP)



WHY WOMEN'S HEALTH?

Women's health has long been associated with reproductive health. As a result, many aspects of women's health have been left under-examined. However, the scope of women's health has expanded to include issues facing women across the life span and has moved beyond reproductive health to include other aspects of women's health. Women's health includes, but is not limited to: diseases of concern unique to women, diseases or conditions more prevalent in women, diseases or conditions more serious among women and diseases for which the risk factors are different for women. Additionally, there are numerous social issues affecting women's health that must be addressed in order to supply women with adequate, competent and high quality health care.

Physical Issues

In terms of physical health and well-being, due to the influence of the biomedical model of health, women have long been ignored in terms of delivery, research and access to health care. Because women are greatly underrepresented as research subjects, many issues particular to women's health have gone undetected, and therefore, untreated. With the (white) male body as the norm, women's health continues to suffer.



Before passage of the 1993 Equal Rights Amendment for Medical Research, which requires women be a part of all studies receiving funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), women were virtually invisible in research trials.

Since 1993, there have been a number of studies published that demonstrate important differences between women's and men's health (including heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes and depression). Differences include:

- One research project evaluating aspirin as a preventive measure for heart attack studied 22,071 men and no women.¹ When studies included women, it was found that aspirin was not as effective in treating women.
- Hormonal differences play a key role in how women are affected by disease and how they respond to treatment. How can drugs be prescribed to women without any knowledge of how women's hormones influence the effects?¹
- There are some diseases that affect women in much higher numbers than men. For example, 80 percent of people with an autoimmune disease (e.g., lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis) are women.
- Men have a greater composition of water in their bodies than women. This means drugs can have a stronger effect on women, making it necessary to adjust dosage levels on medications accordingly.

However, despite the inclusion of women in clinical trials, women continue to be greatly underrepresented, resulting in inadequate data on many health issues particular to women. There are critical gaps in research on women's health.

Women, on average, live eight years longer than men. With these added years, women may face more chronic illnesses than men, or, due to duration, illnesses may take a different course or require additional treatments. In addition, the longevity can affect women's quality of life while bringing to the forefront long-term care issues.

Societal Issues

The changing role of women in society has had a large impact on women's health and well-being. For example:

- There are increasing numbers of women living in poverty (termed the "feminization of poverty"). Women account for 70 percent of the one billion people worldwide who live in poverty. Poverty, associated with limited access to health care and exposure to a system that provides a lower quality of care to the poor, is the cause of many illnesses that affect women, children and the elderly at disproportionate rates.
- While there are more women, and women with children, in the labor force, women continue to be paid less than men which greatly affects the type and quality of health care women receive.
- Violence against women is reaching epidemic proportions in the United States and this often goes unrecognized by health professionals.

- Violence against women is the cause of approximately 50 percent of all emergency room visits, including psychiatric care. Yet, only four percent of these cases are recognized as abuse by the medical personnel who treat them.

Access Issues

There are a number of issues that affect a woman's ability to access needed health care including the availability of health insurance and the existence of adequate health services (i.e., reasonable geographic locations and appointment times).

- Women are often the primary caregivers in their homes and will often forgo personal health needs to assure their dependents get the health care they need.
- Women are often the ones making health care decisions in their homes; thus, it is imperative they have access to informative and easy-to-read health information.

Ohio Data

"Heart disease is the number one cause of death for Ohio women. In 1999-2000, 17,210 Ohio women died from coronary heart disease. Cancer is the second most-frequent cause of death among Ohio women. Lung cancer causes the most deaths, followed by breast, colon and rectal, ovarian and uterine cancers, respectively. Diabetes is a larger health risk among black and other women than white women. It is the fourth-leading cause of death among black and other women and the sixth-leading cause of death among white women."²

Conclusion

It is important that education about women's health is available throughout the state, via listservs, conferences, workshops, newsletters, etc., so women can make more informed choices about their health and health care services.

¹Ratcliff, Kathryn Strother. *Women and Health: Power, Technology, Inequality, and Conflict in a Gendered World*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002.

²Vital Statistics, The Ohio Department of Health.

FOUNDATIONS DEALING WITH WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES

The Avon Foundation

1345 Avenue of the Americas
New York NY 10105-0196

Toll free: 1-866-505-AVON (2866)

E-mail: info@avonfoundation.org

Web site: <http://www.avoncompany.com/women/avonfoundation/overview.html>

The Avon Foundation, an accredited 501(c)(3) public charity,



was founded in 1955 to improve the lives of women and their families. As it passes the half century milestone, the Avon Foundation brings this mission to life through two key areas of focus: breast cancer and domestic violence.

Breast Cancer

The Avon Breast Cancer Crusade was launched in 1992 and now includes breast cancer programs in more than 50 countries. While advances have been made, breast cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women worldwide, and in the United States there is a new diagnosis every three minutes. Through 2005, the Avon Breast Cancer Crusade raised and awarded more than \$400 million worldwide for advancing access to care and finding a cure for breast cancer, with a focus on the medically underserved. Funding supports five areas: awareness and education; screening and diagnosis; access to treatment; support services; and scientific research. Beneficiaries range from leading cancer centers to community-based, nonprofit breast health programs. The broad range of recipients creates a powerful international network of research, medical, social service and community-based organizations focused on defeating breast cancer and ensuring access to care.

Domestic Violence

To accelerate its commitment to ending domestic violence, in 2004 the Avon Foundation launched the new Speak Out Against Domestic Violence program, which expands a long history of Avon grassroots support of the domestic violence cause. The new Speak Out program supports awareness,



education, direct services and prevention programs while developing new community outreach and support for victims. Global expansion has been initiated with the launch of Speak Out in Mexico. Since launching the new Speak Out program, more than \$1.6 million has been awarded to domestic violence organizations across the United States. The foundation is partnering with Oscar-nominated actress and producer/director Salma Hayek on the Speak Out program, which includes free educational materials, training programs, fund-raising activities and public service announcements.

Special Projects

The Avon Foundation and Avon Products, Inc. also respond quickly to national and international emergencies. Special pins sold by Avon sales representatives raised \$7 million for the Avon Heart of America Fund to support families, especially children, of those lost in the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Since 2003, the Avon Yellow Ribbon Pin has raised \$3 million to assist families of servicemen and women lost or wounded in Operation Iraqi Freedom and other armed conflicts. In response to the December 2004 tsunami disaster in Asia, the Avon Foundation immediately awarded \$550,000 to the relief efforts, and Avon launched the Heart of Asia pin in the United States and many other countries, bringing total donations to almost \$1 million. In response to the hurricane disasters in fall 2005, Avon and the Avon Foundation made donations of cash and products, and launched the Heart of America Key Chain, which is sold by Avon sales representatives to raise funds for relief and rebuilding efforts.

Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, Inc.

345 Park Avenue
New York NY 10154-0037
Phone: (212) 546-4000

Web site: <http://www.bms.com/philanthropy/data/global.html>

The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation has long believed that through its support for women's health and health education,

it can fulfill the company's mission -- for all people regardless of age or gender -- to extend and enhance human life. Since 1995, the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation has steadily developed its Global Women's Health Program -- engaging leaders in every sector to create and develop novel approaches that enable women to make informed decisions and advocate effectively for their own health and the health care of their dependents. Support has been given to projects that test innovative outreach programs, cultivate multi-sectoral partnerships and add new information to the existing body of knowledge to help define and achieve improved health for women around the world. This initiative includes the effort Better Health for Women: A Global Health Program. The goal of the program is to generate initiatives that will help enhance women's health through novel interdisciplinary strategies that improve education, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and access to care for women worldwide. Since the program's inception, significant resources have been invested in programs that educate women about diseases and conditions that particularly threaten them as women.

Fund for Nonviolence

303 Potrero Street #54
Santa Cruz CA 95060
Phone: (831) 460-9321
Toll Free: 1-866-454-8006
Fax: (831) 460-9137
E-mail: mail@fundfornonviolence.org
Web site: <http://www.fundfornonviolence.org>

The Fund for Nonviolence cultivates and supports community-based efforts to bring about social change that "moves humanity towards a more just and compassionate coexistence." The organization seeks and encourages proposals that, in addition to meeting the criteria of their funding programs, come from organizations that:

- Reflect the spirit of nonviolence in their organizational relations, structure and process.
- Focus on structural changes to root out causes of injustice.
- Demonstrate the capacity to reflect on their experience and adapt to lessons and insights.
- Have a gender perspective that addresses the role of women within the organization and an analysis regarding the implication and impact of the work on women.
- Value the active involvement of the constituencies most impacted by the violence and social injustice being addressed.

The fund has identified three priority areas which informs their funding: women in poverty, children (with an emphasis on girls) and challenging state-sponsored violence.

The Liz Claiborne Foundation

1441 Broadway 5th Floor

New York NY 10018

Phone: (212) 626-5704

Fax: (212) 626-3416

Web site: <http://www.lizclaiborneinc.com/philanthropic/foundation.htm>

In 1981, Liz Claiborne Inc.'s founders established the Liz Claiborne Foundation to serve as the company's center for charitable activities. The Liz Claiborne Foundation is a non-profit legal entity which primarily supports organizations serving the needs of women in the U.S. communities where Liz Claiborne Inc.'s major facilities are located. These include the five boroughs of New York City; Hudson County, New Jersey; Los Angeles County, California; Butler County, Ohio; Monroe County, Pennsylvania; and Massachusetts' North Shore. In addition, a small portion of their grants are directed to major cultural institutions in the New York City area, to national organizations addressing critical issues for women and girls and to nongovernmental organizations in selected Liz Claiborne operating communities abroad.

The Liz Claiborne Foundation provides most of its financial and technical assistance to nonprofit groups and programs that address issues of particular concern to women. Key focus areas



for the Liz Claiborne Foundation's grants are women's economic self-sufficiency, family violence and positive development programming for girls. Some recent grant recipients include:

- Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women (Los Angeles).
- Mount Hope Housing Company (New York).
- Row New York (New York).
- Sadie Nash Leadership Project (New York).
- Supports to Encourage Low-Income Families (Hamilton, Ohio).
- Wellspring House (Gloucester, Mass).
- Women's Resources of Monroe County (Delaware Water Gap, Pa).

Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation

P.O. Box 799044

Dallas TX 75379-9044

Toll free: 1-877-MKCARES (652-2737)

Web site: <http://www.mkacf.org/Main.aspx>

The Mary Kay Ash Charitable Foundation (MKACF) was founded in 1996. The mission of the MKACF is twofold:

- A commitment to eliminate cancers affecting women by supporting top medical scientists who are searching for a cure for breast, uterine, cervical and ovarian cancers.
- A commitment to end the epidemic of violence against women by providing grants to women's shelters and supporting community outreach programs.

In 2005, the MKACF distributed \$20,000 in grants to 150 shelters. In 2001, the foundation underwrote a PBS documentary titled, "Breaking the Silence: Journeys of Hope." The foundation provided an additional \$500,000 grant to underwrite a companion documentary titled, "Breaking the Silence: Children's Stories." The second documentary chronicles the long-term effects of domestic violence on children. To order the "Breaking the Silence" videos, refer to the MKACF Web site for information.

National Organization for Women Foundation

1100 H Street NW 3rd Floor

Washington DC 20005

Phone: (202) 628-8669

Web site: <http://www.nowfoundation.org>

The National Organization for Women (NOW) Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization devoted to furthering women's rights through education and litigation. The NOW Foundation is affiliated with the National Organization for Women, the largest women's rights organization in the United States, with a membership of more than 500,000 contributing women and

men in more than 550 chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

To raise awareness and take action against life-threatening advertising about weight and beauty, the NOW Foundation launched the "Redefining Liberation" campaign with a grant administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The NOW Foundation distributed an informative video to NOW chapters and community organizations across the country that are using it to educate and activate people around these issues, especially young women and girls. To order the video, refer to the link at <http://loveyourbody.nowfoundation.org/order.html>. The NOW Foundation is focusing on the development of new and expanded educational materials and increased outreach. The project is mobilizing women and girls to expose the deadly health risks of tobacco and fashion advertising.

Open Meadows Foundation

P.O. Box 150-607

Van Brunt Station

Brooklyn NY 11215-607

Phone: (718) 768-2249

E-mail: openmeadows@igc.org

Web site: <http://www.openmeadows.org>

Open Meadows Foundation is a grant-making organization for projects that are led by and benefit women and girls. Open Meadows Foundation funds projects that do not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age or ability. It offers grants up to \$2,000 to projects that:

- Are designed and implemented by women and girls.
- Reflect the diversity of the community served by the project in both its leadership and organization.
- Promote building community power.
- Promote racial, social, economic and environmental justice.
- Have limited financial access or have encountered obstacles in their search for funding.

Organizational budgets should not exceed \$150,000. Small and start-up organizations are strongly urged to apply, and proposals not previously funded have priority.

Verizon Foundation

Toll free: 1-800-360-7955

Fax: (908) 630-2660

E-mail: Verizon.Foundation@Verizon.com

Web site: <http://foundation.verizon.com>

The Verizon Foundation places a special emphasis on education -- from innovative programs such as MarcoPolo, which provides Web-based educational resources to help K-12 teachers prepare students for success in the 21st century, to basic

literacy. The foundation addresses health and safety issues by fostering awareness and prevention of domestic violence in America, as well as using technology to make the Internet a safe place for children and families. Since 2000, it has invested more than \$400 million in programs, partnerships and organizations in the United States and around the world. In 2005, the foundation awarded more than 3,500 grants totaling \$74.8 million to charitable and nonprofit agencies that serve the needs of diverse communities -- from victims of domestic



violence, to people with disabilities, as well as people who are economically and socially disadvantaged.

The Verizon Wireless Hopeline® Program was introduced by Verizon Wireless in 1995, putting wireless technology to work by providing cell phones to victims working to rebuild their lives and to the agencies supporting them. Today, Hopeline® is a multi-faceted, corporatewide program. It includes:

- A national phone recycling and re-use effort.
- An employee volunteerism component.
- Support for domestic violence prevention, education and awareness and other victims' services programs.
- Partnerships with law enforcement agencies, professional sports teams, educational institutions and corporations nationwide.

Verizon Wireless offers customers a convenient way to donate old and unused cell phones daily at its store locations across the country. Since the introduction of the national program in October 2001, Hopeline® has received more than 3 million phones and distributed more than 30,000 phones with service and airtime to shelters for use by victims of domestic violence. And in keeping with its longstanding commitment to the environment, the program has facilitated the recycling of nearly 600,000 phones.

PRINT RESOURCES

Diagnosing Women's Health Care. New York, New York: NCJW Journal, Volume 29, 2006. (Author, Alina Salganikoff). The article highlights the special challenges many women face in affording and accessing comprehensive health care in the United States. It discusses the state of women's health coverage, emerging issues for women in Medicaid and Medicare and the potential effects of "consumer-directed" health plans on women.

Making the Grade on Women's Health: A National and State-by-State Report Card 2004. Washington, D.C.: National Women's Law Center. This report is the third in a series assessing the overall health of women at the national and state levels. The report card is designed to promote the health and well-being of women in the United States by providing a comprehensive assessment of women's health. It evaluates 34 health status indicators and 67 health policy indicators and assesses progress, or lack thereof, in reaching key benchmarks related to the status of women's health. The report card also provides an important overview of key disparities in the health of women based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability status and other factors.

Women and Health Care: A National Profile. Women's Health Policy Program, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005. The second national survey of women by the Kaiser Family Foundation examines a broad range of health care issues facing women including their health status, health care costs, insurance, access to care, prevention and role in family health care. The survey finds that a substantial percentage of women cannot afford to go to the doctor or get prescriptions filled. Although a majority of women are in good health and satisfied with their health care, many have health problems and do not get adequate levels of preventive care. *Women and Health Care: A National Profile* is a nationally representative telephone survey of 2,766 women ages 18 and older. A shorter companion survey of 507 men was conducted for comparison purposes.

The Women's Health Data Book: A Profile of Women's Health in the United States, 3rd Edition. Washington, D.C.: Jacobs Institute of Women's Health and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 2001. This report offers the latest data and trends on the wide range of health issues that affect women across their life span. The book addresses social and economic factors and provides up-to-date information on chronic conditions, reproductive health, mental health,



violence health behaviors and access to and quality of health services received by women.

Women's Health USA 2005. Merrifield, Virginia: Health Resources and Services Administration, 2005. This data book was developed to provide readers with an easy-to-use collection of current and historical data on some of the most pressing health challenges facing women, their families and their communities. This edition is intended to be a concise reference for policymakers and program managers at the federal, state and local levels to identify and clarify issues affecting the health of women.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Black Women's Health.com

Web site: <http://www.blackwomenshealth.com>

Blackwomenshealth.com (BWH) is a company that was founded in January 1999 by David P. Pryor, M.D., a board certified internal medicine physician. BWH has a simple philosophy and mission: to be the premier Internet site dedicated to promoting the physical, mental and spiritual wellness of today's African American woman. The site strives to educate and empower women on ways to improve their health status in an effort to live happier, more productive lives. Visitors to the site will find both accurate medical information written by physicians and other health professionals, as well as motivational and self-improvement articles written by a variety of individuals who have helped to make a difference in people's lives.

Black Women's Health Imperative

1420 K Street, NW Suite 1000
Washington DC 20005
Phone: (202) 548-4000

Fax: (202) 543-9743
E-mail: nbwhp@nbwhp.org
Web site: <http://www.blackwomenshealth.org/>

Black Women's Health Imperative (the new name of the National Black Women's Health Project [NBWHP]), is a leading African American health education, research, advocacy and leadership development institution.

Two initiatives unique to the organization are Sister Circle™ sessions, a self-help group approach to Black women's wellness facilitated through local communities, and SisterForce™, a collective voice of individuals who advocate for policies and legislation in the best interests of the health and well-being of Black women.

The organization offers tools and information for women to give themselves informed self-care to prevent health problems before they occur, to recognize symptoms and early warning signs and to understand the range of options available for specific health situations.

Fundsnet Services Online

Web site: <http://www.fundsnet.com>

This Web site provides a listing of organizations and foundations that distribute grant monies in a variety of categories. Some of the categories relevant to women's health issues are: Education Grants, Foundation Directory, Government Funding, Health Care and Research, Human Services Grants and Women's Grants.

National Women's Health Information Center

8270 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive

Fairfax VA 22031

Toll free: 1-800-994-9662

Web site: <http://www.womenshealth.gov>

The National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) is an information resource on women's health for the Office of Women's Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It acts as a federal "women's health central" for public health care professionals, researchers and the media. With access through both a toll-free telephone line and the Internet, the NWHIC reduces to a single point

of entry the vast array of information available through the more than 80 federal health clearinghouses and hundreds of private-sector organization resources. Information by phone is available in English and Spanish.

"Women's Health Professional"

Health Resources Publishing

P.O. Box 456

Allenwood NJ 08720

Phone: (732) 292-1100

Fax: (732) 292-1111

Web Site: <http://womenshealthprofessional.com/>

"Women's Health Professional" is an online resource produced by Health Resources Publishing (HRP), which has been providing targeted information to health care professionals since 1978. Its mission is to provide subscribers and clients with the most useful, valuable news, information and insight needed by women's health professionals engaged in the full range of career settings.

In addition to producing "Women's Health Professional," HRP also sponsors Women's Health Forum, a moderated discussion group limited to professionals engaged in administering, developing or overseeing women's health programs. "Women's Health Professional" also sponsors training and education programs consistent with its mission.

HRP serves its clients' needs with highly focused and unique management newsletters on a range of topics, including grants for health care, fund raising, hospice and palliative care, adult day services, health services for seniors, long-term care and marketing. HRP also publishes yearbooks, directories and special reports and provides clients with special customized research information upon request.

Women's Health Web Page, Ohio Department of Health (ODH)

Web site: http://www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/hprri/wom_hlt/sadvwhlth.aspx

The ODH Women's Health Web Page includes information about the Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Prevention Program, the Ohio Women's Health Listserv, electronic versions of previous issues of Women's Health Update newsletter and the Women's Health Fact Sheets.

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