

March 17, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Burwell
Secretary
US Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Burwell,

We have recently learned that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is planning to terminate its unique interactive women's health data site, Quick Health Data Online (QHDO), at the end of March 2015. **The women's health community is very concerned about the loss of this resource** which provides access for the public to data on women from 2000 to the present, which cannot be readily found elsewhere. **This decision was made without consultation with or outreach to the women's health community and the many other stakeholders who use this invaluable resource.**

Quick Health Data Online is the only source to find critical women's health indicators that can be searched simultaneously by race, by sex, by geography (state and county), and that can intersect the variables of sex by race. For example, data on utilization of preventive services by African American women, and by other racial and ethnic subpopulations of women, in each state, is easily found in QHDO, but is very challenging for the public to find in any other data system.

QHDO combines existing datasets from a wide range of Federal agencies (CDC, NIH/NCI, CMS, HRSA, Census, Department of Justice/FBI, USDA), and also non-governmental data sources such as professional association surveys. In addition, a number of tools have been developed to present data at the national, state, and county levels that are of great use to policymakers including federal, state and county officials; the media; and the public. These include chartbooks mapping key health indicators, state factsheets, and also county level analyses on demographics, women's health indicators, and community health assets.

This valuable resource was developed, in part, in response to calls by women's health advocacy organizations for accessible data on women's health. Thus any decision made regarding the future of this site should include input from the women's health community through an open public forum process. Regardless of the question of where this resource should be located within our federal agencies, we clearly believe it must be maintained and want to work with you to identify a solution.

Development of QHDO has required a long-term, consistent investment of time and resources by HHS over the last decade. QHDO already includes important information and analysis that HHS needs to fulfill its programmatic, oversight and enforcement responsibilities, and with proper attention it could become even more useful.

A sudden shutdown will deprive the public of access to critical information and will waste the investment that has been made. A shutdown would also deprive other offices within HHS of information they need to understand and address gender and race-based inequities in our health care system. This valuable resource must not be lost.

We urgently request that you put a temporary stop on the process to close down this important resource on March 31, 2015, until there can be a broader evaluation and discussion with women's health advocates, researchers, and other stakeholders through a public hearing and comment period. This consultation should address not only where to house the QHDO system, but also how it could be enhanced to further HHS's mission. While this important public process occurs, the QHDO system and tools should be maintained and publicly available as currently organized.

We request a meeting with you to discuss our concerns as soon as possible.

Thank you very much.

Black Women's Health Imperative

Connors Center for Women's Health and Gender Biology, Brigham and Women's Hospital

Jacobs Institute of Women's Health

National Center for Health Research

National Women's Health Network

National Women's Law Center

Society for Women's Health Research

Union of Concerned Scientists, Center for Science and Democracy

WomenHeart