



June 25, 2020

The Honorable Robin Kelly
 U.S. House of Representatives
 2416 Rayburn House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515

Letter to Support H.R. 6383 - The Uterine Fibroid Research and Education Act of 2020

Dear Congresswoman Kelly:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to express our support for H.R. 6383, the Uterine Fibroid Research and Education Act of 2020.

Uterine fibroids, a common and significant health problem, affects an estimated 26 million women between the ages of 15 and 50, across all racial backgrounds and socioeconomic levels in the United States. While normally benign, uterine fibroids can vary in size from a half inch nodule to clusters of more than seven inches in diameter. Research shows more than 80 percent of African American and approximately 70 percent of Caucasian women develop fibroids by the time they reach menopause. African American women have also been shown to develop earlier onset

fibroids that tend to become larger and more numerous as compared with other women. More research is needed to determine the burden of uterine fibroids among all racial/ethnic groups.

Although uterine fibroids are the most common gynecological condition affecting women, many suffer for years before seeking care. Reasons include the fact that many adolescent girls and women are unaware of what uterine fibroids are, believing that symptoms like heavy menstrual bleeding (HMB) lasting more than a week, pelvic and lower abdominal pain, anemia, and frequent urination during periods are normal. Providers also need to better understand the condition and its symptoms to adequately provide treatment options to their patients. Generally, despite the widespread prevalence, there is a lack of awareness and prioritization of uterine fibroids as an important women's issue.

The physical, emotional, and societal costs are astounding:

- 1) 200,000 hysterectomies are performed each year primarily to remove uterine fibroids.
- 2) Severe fibroid symptoms can be disabling and women with uterine fibroids are more likely to experience infertility, miscarriages, as well as difficulties during pregnancy and childbirth.
- 3) Uterine fibroids are associated with low birth-weight babies and infant mortality.
- 4) The direct annual costs to the U.S. health care system is estimated to be as high as \$9.4 billion.
- 5) Pain, stress, and other physical and emotional symptoms of uterine fibroids may interfere with a woman's ability to work or work productively, thus impacting her quality of life, and the ability to care for her family. This cost has been estimated to be as high as \$7.76 billion annually.

More research and education are needed to reduce the burden of uterine fibroids in the U.S. We, the undersigned, are dedicated to improving the health of the women we serve. We applaud the efforts of the U.S. House of Representatives in recognizing and elevating this issue. We look forward to working with Congress, stakeholders and women's health advocates to ensure that this often devastating condition is given the attention it deserves so no woman suffers needlessly.

Sincerely,

Black Women's Health Imperative

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Sexual Health Association
American Society for Reproductive Medicine
CARE About Fibroids
HealthyWomen
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Black Nurses Association
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc.
National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.
National Hispanic Medical Association

National Medical Association
National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women
Society for Women's Health Research
Southern Christian Leadership Conference
The Fibroid Foundation
The White Dress Project