October 13, 2023

The Honorable Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
242 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kat Cammack
2421 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Cherfilus-McCormick and Cammack:

We, the undersigned national organizations committed to improving America’s heart health, write to thank you for introducing the resolution designating September 2023 as “National Cholesterol Education Month” and September 30 as “LDL-C Awareness Day.” This legislation takes an important step to raise awareness about the importance of monitoring and controlling cholesterol levels and about the role that LDL-C, or “bad” cholesterol, can play in an individual’s risk of heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

High cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease and stroke. A 2023 survey from the American Heart Association (AHA) found that 75% of heart attack and stroke survivors reported having high cholesterol. According to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), high LDL cholesterol can double a person’s risk of heart disease. Yet many people aren’t aware of their cholesterol levels. The same survey from the AHA found that 47% of survivors were unaware of their LDL number.

Learning your cholesterol levels is simple; it requires a blood test, known as a lipid panel test, from your doctor. This month, the Society for Women’s Health Research (SWHR) has been leading a #ReadMyLips campaign focused on raising awareness about the risk factors for heart disease and on the importance of getting regular cholesterol screenings.

Awareness is key in this fight for heart health. Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women annually in the United States, causing one in every five deaths. While alarming on its own, this statistic is made more distressing because experts believe about 80 percent of deaths from premature heart disease and stroke could be preventable through lifestyle changes (e.g., through physical activity, a healthy diet, and quitting smoking) and the management of common medical conditions, such as high cholesterol. If lifestyle changes aren’t enough, there are also cholesterol-reducing medications. Based on estimates, only about half (55%) of the 86 million U.S. adults who could benefit from taking medication to manage their high LDL cholesterol are doing so. There is clearly a disconnect.

Our nation’s efforts to encourage heart healthy behaviors and to promote prevention strategies, including knowing one’s risk for heart disease, all hinge on education. Therefore, we would like to thank you for sounding the alarm for heart health and serving as leaders on this critical public
health issue. Together, we can increase awareness of cardiovascular disease, improve diagnosis through regular cholesterol screenings, close quality gaps, and more.

Again, we thank you for being champions on this issue. We look forward to working with you as we continue to chart a path forward on this critical public health issue.

Please contact SWHR Chief Advocacy Officer Lindsey Horan at lindsey@swhr.org or (202) 496-5003 if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Aging Research
Alliance for Women’s Health and Prevention
American Heart Association
Association of Black Cardiologists
Family Heart Foundation
HealthyWomen
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women’s Health
National Grange
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Rural Health Association
Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Society for Women’s Health Research
The Mended Hearts, Inc.

Cc: The Honorable Alma Adams
    The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver
    The Honorable Janice Schakowsky
    The Honorable Donald Payne, Jr.
    The Honorable Al Green
    The Honorable Ann Kuster
    The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester
    The Honorable Marc Veasey
    The Honorable Henry “Hank” Johnson, Jr.