



January 22, 2024

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
702 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Hyde-Smith and Peters:

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 resolution, along with the companion resolution from the House of Representatives, 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. In September, the Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR) led 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 Miltenberger 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
American Medical Women's Association
Association of Black Cardiologists
BLKHLTH
Family Heart Foundation
HealthyWomen
MANA, A National Latina Organization
National Association of Hispanic Nurses (NAHN)
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging
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.