Society for Women's Health Research

Menopause Advocacy Toolkit

October 2026

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What is Menopause?

Menopause is a natural life stage reached after 12 consecutive months with no period, without intervention (e.g., contraceptives). Menopause marks the end of a woman's menstrual cycle and reproductive years, but it is not one moment but rather a gradual transition. The menopause journey includes three main stages: perimenopause, menopause, and postmenopause.

The Effects of Menopause

Menopause impacts all women. Midlife (typically defined as ages 35-65) represents a significant portion of a woman's lifespan, with 39% of women in the United States currently in this stage of life.[1] Women in midlife often experience significant health transitions, including menopause, which, on average, occurs at age 51.[2] Women may go through menopause naturally when their bodies stop producing normal levels of estrogen and progesterone, but women can also go into medical menopause due to factors such as surgery, chemotherapy, or radiation.

Women going through the menopause journey can experience varying symptoms, with potential effects on their physical, cognitive, psychological, and reproductive health. Menopause is not a disease and does not need to be stopped or cured. However, changes and fluctuations in estrogen levels during the menopause journey have been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, genitourinary conditions, osteoporosis, and cognitive and mental health changes.

Menopause can also have variable impacts on women of different races and ethnicities. For example, Black, Hispanic, and Latina women are more likely to begin perimenopause earlier and experience a longer menopause transition than white women.[3] Beyond the differences with menopause onset, women of different races and ethnicities experience varying symptoms and symptom severity, and they often have different clinical care and treatment experiences. For instance, when compared to white women, Black women are less likely to have medical-record documented symptoms or treatment.[4]

Menopause also affects the role of women in the workforce. In the United States, more than 75% of women work throughout their menopause transition and for years postmenopause.[5] However, menopause workplace accommodations and support are limited, and many women are uncomfortable discussing menopause in an office setting. For example, SWHR's 2024 *Employee Perspectives and Challenges Concerning the Transition of Menopause (EMPACT Menopause) Bulletin* found that 59% of women feel uncomfortable asking for accommodations at work.[6]

The bottom line is clear: **Menopause impacts all areas of a woman's life.**

[1] U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 1-year estimates public use microdata sample. U.S. Accessed September 12, 2026 via the Microdata Access Tool (MDAT). https://data.census.gov/app/mdat/ACSPUMS1Y2024/

[2] Takahashi, T. A., & Johnson, K. M. (2015). Menopause. The Medical clinics of North America, 99(3), 521–534. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mcna.2015.01.006

[3] Paramsothy, P., Harlow, S.D., Nan, B., Greendale, G.A., Santoro, N., Crawford, S.L., Gold, E.B., Tepper, P.G., & Randolph Jr., J.F. (2017). Duration of the menopausal transition is longer in women with young age at onset: The multiethnic study of women's health across the nation. *Menopause, 24*(2),142-149. https://doi.org/10.1097/gme.0000000000000736

[4] Blanken, A., Gibson, C.J., Li, Y., Huang, A.J., Byers, A.L., Maguen, S., Inslicht, S., & Seal, K. (2022). Racial/ethnic disparities in the diagnosis and management of menopause symptoms among midlife women veterans. Menopause, 29(7), 877-882. https://doi.org/10.1097/gme.0000000000001978

[5] *Employment status of the civilian noninstitutional population by age, sex, and race.* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat03.pdf

[6] *Employee Perspectives and Challenges Concerning the Transition of Menopause (EMPACT Menopause) Bulletin*. Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR). (2024). https://swhr.org/resources/empact-menopause-study-bulletin/

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We Need Menopause Advocacy

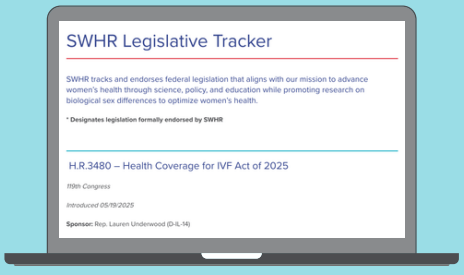
Advocacy is an essential tool in drawing attention to that policies, systems, and resources that can promote an improved menopause experience for all. Advocacy can exist in many forms—supporting a piece of legislation, raising awareness within your community, or asking for wellness accommodations at work. No matter what menopause-related cause resonates most with you, learn how you can advocate for menopause today!

How to Advocate for Menopause Policy

Reach out to Your Elected Officials

Your elected officials want to hear from you. Is there a piece of menopause legislation you would like to see signed into law? Are there specific types of menopause care, coverage, or support that you think should be incorporated into health care policy? Reach out to your representatives and share your experience or tell them why the issue is important to you. When reaching out, consider the following questions:

- **What is your ask?** What are you there to talk about?
- **What is your goal for the meeting?** Is there a specific piece of legislation you would like to see passed? Would you like them to invest more money in federal menopause research? Or are you simply asking them for more information about a certain policy? Having a set goal will help you frame the meeting and set expectations up front.
- **How will this change improve the health of women?** How will this help you and/or other women going through the menopause journey? Would this policy have made a change in your journey or health care trajectory? Share your story.
- **What data, research, or evidence will help you make the case?** Being equipped with research, statistics, and other facts (e.g., data on the impact of menopause on workplace participation) can help you make your case for this change in policy.
- **How can you make the issue local?** Think about what this change would do for your community. Elected officials are interested in knowing how issues directly impact their constituency.



Check out the Society for Women's Health Research **Legislative Tracker** for the latest updates on women's health policy and reference the "Sample Communications to Congress" materials on the next page to kickstart your outreach.

Find Your Representative

Find Your Senator

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Sample Communications to Congress

Dear Representative/Senator_____,

As a constituent, I am writing to express support for the [insert menopause-related legislation name] and ask that you consider co-sponsoring this important legislation. This bill would make a difference in the lives of the 1.3 million women in the United States who transition into menopause each year and the millions more who will go through this change in their life. This bill would make a difference by providing [insert short description of anticipated bill impact. Ex: dedicated research/awareness on menopause symptoms/disparities/care/treatment, coverage for treatment, etc.]

[Insert a personal anecdote or connection to menopause here.]

Given the significant personal, professional, and economic impacts of menopause, I encourage you to work with your colleagues to promote this bill's passage and prioritize our nation's focus on supporting women in midlife.

Your support is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Current Advocacy Opportunities

Policy is constantly evolving, but here are some issues currently at the forefront of the menopause conversation:

- **Supporting research on menopause**: Given that women were not required to be included in federally funded clinical research until 1993, there are still significant gaps in our understanding of how menopause impacts women's health, including connections to chronic conditions. We need more research on:
  - Women's health throughout the lifespan, especially in midlife
  - Racial and ethnic disparities in menopause symptoms and timing
  - Menopause hormone and non-hormone therapies
- **Improved coverage and access to menopause treatments and therapies**: An estimated 73% of women are not treating their menopause symptoms, and 87% do not seek care for symptoms.[7,8] Scientific advances will only take us so far. We need to improve:
  - Coverage of treatments for menopause symptoms
  - FDA approval pathways that prioritize women's midlife health in drug development and regulatory review processes
- **Clinical education and public awareness**: About 52% of women reported lacking the tools they need to navigate menopause successfully.[9] To help ensure every woman will receive the information they need to live comfortably and in good health, we need:
  - Embedded menopause curriculum in medical school
  - Ongoing menopause and midlife learning initiatives for all physicians
  - A national menopause awareness campaign

[7] *The State of Menopause.* Bonafide. (2021). https://hellobonafide.com/pages/state-of-menopause

[8] Kapoor, E., Safwan, N., Chaudhry, R., Griffin. J.M., Kling, J.M., Shufelt, C.L., Cole, K.C., Enders, F.T., & Faubion, S.S. (2025). Addressing menopause symptoms: Barriers and opportunities for improvement. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings, 100*(11), 1897-1907. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mayocp.2025.02.018

[9] *The State of Menopause.* Bonafide. (2026). https://hellobonafide.com/pages/state-of-menopause

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Advocate at the State Level

Menopause policy is gaining great momentum at the state level, with over 60 bills related to menopause care, coverage, and treatment introduced in 25 states as of 2026.[10] Advocating at the state level represents another important advocacy opportunity. States have more direct control over areas like insurance regulation and workplace policies; can act more quickly than the federal government; and often legislation from states serves as the starting model for policies that eventually translate to national change. Find your state legislators on Ballotpedia and check out the state-level legislative tracker from Let's Talk Menopause to get involved in the menopause conversations happening in your state.

When to Advocate

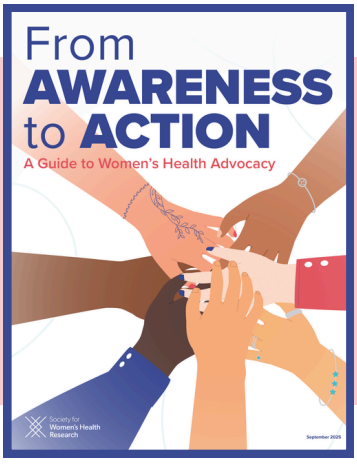
Timing is an important consideration when planning your advocacy. The U.S. Congress and state legislatures operate on set legislative calendars. Depending on your goal, advocacy may be most effective at certain points in the legislative process—for example, when appropriations and spending bills are being developed or when relevant legislation is under consideration. Explore the congressional calendars to learn about relevant dates in the legislative process and check out your state legislature's website for information on state sessions.

Promoting your cause alongside existing awareness campaigns or awareness dates is an effective way to gain momentum around menopause conversations and raise general awareness. Here are some relevant awareness days and months related to menopause during which you may want to advocate:

- Women's Health Research Day (January 25) (advocate for additional menopause research)
- Women's Health Month (May)
- Labor Rights Week (Late August) (advocate for creating healthy workplaces)
- Healthy Aging Month (September)
- Perimenopause Awareness Month (September)
- Menopause Awareness Month (October)
- World Menopause Day (October 18)

Looking for more advocacy tools? Many organizations have advocacy toolkits that are free to use and provide context about when your advocacy may be most impactful.

Check out SWHR's Women's Health Advocacy Toolkit today!



[10] Perimenopause and menopause advocacy. Let's Talk Menopause. https://www.letstalkmenopause.org/advocacy-map

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Starting the Conversation around Menopause

Advocacy does not solely exist within the policy space. Given that menopause can impact a woman's daily life, including work and personal relationships, sharing your story and having conversations about menopause with friends, family, and coworkers are important forms of advocacy, too.



Unsure how to start the conversation? Check out conversation guides and tips on page 28 of the Menopause Preparedness Toolkit and pages 10-11 of the Menopause Workplace Resource Guide for Women.

Want to share your menopause story? SWHR is always looking for women's health stories to share and spotlight. Share your story with SWHR at swhr.org/shareyourstory.

Menopause Conversations on Social Media

You can advocate for your own health and for other women going through the menopause journey by spreading awareness on social media. Check out the sample text here to start writing your own posts or visit the #SWHRtalksMenopause hashtag on all major social media channels and reshare SWHR's posts about menopause.

Instagram/Facebook/LinkedIn

Sample Post 1 (recommended for posting in September)

September is #PerimenopauseAwarenessMonth, a time to acknowledge the effects of the #menopause transition on the health and lives of women in #midlife.

Did you know? 45% of women don't know the difference between #perimenopause and menopause before experiencing symptoms.

[Insert personal anecdote].

This month, I am sharing my story to help other women prepare for this natural life stage. #MyMenopauseStory

Sample Post 2 (recommended for posting in October)

📢 *I support the passage of [insert menopause-related legislation], which will [insert impact of legislation] for the millions of women in the United States who are impacted by #menopause each year.*

[Option to insert personal anecdote].

This #MenopauseAwarenessMonth, join me in supporting this important health policy and sharing this message.

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Sample Post 1 (recommended for posting in September)
[Insert personal anecdote]. This #PerimenopauseAwarenessMonth, I am sharing my #menopause story to help other women feel empowered and learn more about this natural stage of #midlife. #MyMenopauseStory

Sample Post 2 (recommended for posting in October)
📢 I support the passage of [insert menopause-related legislation], which will [insert impact of legislation] for millions of women in the US impacted by #menopause. #MenopauseAwarenessMonth

Menopause Conversations at Work

According to the 2024 *EMPACT Menopause Bulletin* conducted by SWHR, 61% of employees indicated that their workplace did not have any menopause-specific policies.[11] Yet, menopause can significantly affect women in the workplace, often through symptoms that are difficult for others to see. In the 2026 *EMPACT Menopause Study Report*, respondents indicated that cognitive and psychological symptoms such as brain fog and mood fluctuation had the greatest influence on their work productivity.[12]

Given the toll menopause symptoms can have on women, it is important to have conversations about menopause in the workplace. However, women do not always feel comfortable discussing their symptoms, showing there still may be discomfort around personal disclosure.

It is important for men and woman alike to be advocates for menopause wellness at work and to normalize the conversation around menopause in the workplace.

Here are a few ways to advocate for menopause wellness at work:

- **Determine what workplace accommodations will be helpful for you**. For employers, consider what accommodations your organization offers and take proactive steps to create menopause-friendly work environments. Check out SWHR's recommendations for "Menopause-Friendly Workplace Accommodations" on pages 8-9 of the Menopause Workplace Resource Guide for Women.
- **Have a conversation with your manager** about menopause and possible accommodations. Check out SWHR's conversation guide on pages 10-11 of the Menopause Workplace Resource Guide for Women.
- **Start, join, or contribute to an employee resource group**. Employee resource groups are great platforms for coworkers to share information and find support on a variety of topics. Check with your office to see if a group for women's health, midlife, or menopause already exists, and if not, consider starting your own.

Explore more SWHR menopause workplace resources at the end of this toolkit.



Start Today! Put up SWHR's "**Supporting the Menopause Journey in the Workplace**" Poster in your workplace to share information with your colleagues.

[11] *Employee Perspectives and Challenges Concerning the Transition of Menopause (EMPACT Menopause) Bulletin*. Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR). (2024). https://swhr.org/resources/empact-menopause-study-bulletin/

[12] Aninye IO, Goulmamine S, Houston D, & Chew S. (2026). Menopause and the Workplace: Implications for Productivity, Retention, and Equity. Society for Women's Health Research.

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This toolkit is just the start to the menopause advocacy journey! There are many more ways to advocate for midlife and menopause wellness; increase community education around menopause; support menopause legislation and policy; and improve workplace wellness and support for menopause.

Share this toolkit with someone today and explore more about menopause in the resources below.

SWHR General Resources

- Empowering the Health of Women in Midlife Fact Sheet: swhr.org/resources/empowering-the-health-of-women-in-midlife
- From Awareness to Action: A Guide to Women's Health Advocacy: swhr.org/resources/from-awareness-to-action-a-guide-to-womens-health-advocacy
- Menopause Preparedness Toolkit: A Woman's Empowerment Guide: swhr.org/resources/menopause-preparedness-toolkit-a-womans-empowerment-guide
- Menopause 101 Fact Sheet: swhr.org/resources/menopause-101
- Navigating Menopause Care Resource Guide: swhr.org/resources/navigating-menopause-care-resource-guide
- SWHR Legislative Tracker: swhr.org/policy/legislative-tracker

SWHR Menopause Workplace Resources

- Employee Perspectives and Challenges Concerning the Transition of Menopause (EMPACT Menopause) Study Bulletin: swhr.org/resources/empact-menopause-study-bulletin
- Employee Perspectives and Challenges Concerning the Transition of Menopause (EMPACT Menopause) Study Report: swhr.org/resources/empact-menopause-report/
- Menopause Workplace Resource Guide for Managers: swhr.org/resources/menopause-workplace-resource-guide-for-managers
- Menopause Workplace Resource Guide for Women: swhr.org/resources/menopause-workplace-resource-guide-for-women
- Roadmap to Menopause-Friendly Workplaces: swhr.org/resources/roadmap-to-menopause-friendly-workplaces
- Supporting the Menopause Journey in the Workplace: A Social Media Toolkit: swhr.org/resources/supporting-the-menopause-journey-in-the-workplace-a-social-media-toolkit

Menopause Partners and Resources

- AARP: aarp.org
- Black Girls Guide to Surviving Menopause: blackgirlsguidetosurvivingmenopause.com
- Black Women's Health Imperative Power in the Pause: powerinthepause.bwhi.org
- Let's Talk Menopause: letstalkmenopause.org
- Let's Talk Menopause State Legislative Tracker: letstalkmenopause.org/advocacy-map
- Medscape Innovations in Women's Health Coalition (IWHC): medscape.org/sites/advances/iwhc
- National Menopause Foundation: nationalmenopausefoundation.org
- Red Hot Mamas: redhotmamas.org
- The Fuchsia Tent: thefuchsiatent.com
- The Menopause Society: menopause.org