



**Heart Disease and Stroke. You're the Cure.**

## Bill Summary:

### **Heart disease Education, Analysis and Research, and Treatment for Women Act (HEART for Women Act)**

**A bill to improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart disease and stroke in women.**

#### **AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION POSITION**

The American Heart Association and its American Stroke Association division strongly support the HEART for Women Act and urges Congress to pass this important legislation this year. This legislation would help ensure that heart disease and stroke are more widely recognized and more effectively treated in women.

#### **SUPPORTERS**

- Association of Black Cardiologists, Inc.
- Society for Women's Health Research
- WomenHeart: the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease
- American College of Cardiology
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- American Osteopathic Association
- American Medical Women's Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
- Association of Women's Health Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
- Association of Women's Heart Programs
- Black Women's Health Imperative
- Business and Professional Women/USA
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
- General Federation of Women's Clubs
- National Research Center for Women & Families
- And more...

#### **ORIGINAL SPONSORS**

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)  
Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)  
Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA)

#### **WHAT THE BILL WOULD DO**

The HEART for Women Act will help ensure that heart disease and stroke are more widely recognized and more effectively treated in women and take a multi-pronged approach by:

- Raise awareness among women and their health care providers. The legislation authorizes grants to educate healthcare professionals about the prevalence and unique aspects of care for women in the prevention and treatment of cardiovascular diseases. It also authorizes the Medicare program to conduct an educational awareness campaign for older women about their risk for heart disease and stroke.;
- Provide gender and race-specific information for clinicians, researchers, and the public. The legislation would require that healthcare data that is already being reported to the federal government, such as clinical trial and drug and medical device approval data, be stratified by gender, as well as by race and ethnicity.;
- Improve screening for low-income, uninsured women at risk for heart disease and stroke by authorizing the expansion of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)-funded WISEWOMAN program to all 50 states.

#### **WHY CONGRESS SHOULD ENACT THIS LEGISLATION**

- Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women and stroke is the No. 3 killer of women. Heart attack, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases kill more women than the next *five* causes of death combined.
- Since 1979, the death rate for heart disease in men has declined steadily (by 17%), while the death rate for women has declined by only 1.5%, resulting in a disparity in heart disease mortality in women compared to men.
- A recent study found that the heart disease death rate for women ages 35 to 44 actually rose from 1997 to 2002, a worrisome harbinger.
- More than 90% of primary care physicians don't know that heart disease kills more women each year than men.
- Women are more likely than men to die within a year of having an initial heart attack. Women are also less likely than men to receive certain diagnostic testing and treatments, such as angioplasties and stents, for cardiovascular diseases.