



For Immediate Release

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U.S. REP. LOIS CAPPs REINTRODUCES THE HEART FOR WOMEN ACT

(WASHINGTON, Nov. 30, 2011) — U.S. Rep. Lois Capps, D-Calif., today reintroduced vital legislation aimed at improving the cardiovascular health of millions of women nationwide.

The HEART for Women Act would require the U.S. Health and Human Services secretary to submit an annual report to Congress on the quality of and access to care for women with cardiovascular disease. It would also ensure that new and experimental drug and medical device safety and efficacy data reported to the federal government is classified by gender, race and ethnicity. Additionally, the legislation would expand eligibility for funding to all 50 states for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's WISEWOMAN screening program for low-income, underinsured and uninsured women.

"While we have made great progress in the fight against heart disease it remains the number one killer of American women, needlessly claiming the lives of far too many of our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters," Capps said. "Unfortunately not enough people — including health professionals — recognize that heart disease poses such a serious and unique threat to women, and far too many women pay a terrible price for that lack of knowledge. My legislation addresses this critical health issue by ensuring more women have access to screening for heart disease, filling the critical knowledge gaps by ensuring that healthcare professionals are informed about the risks of cardiovascular disease in women, and supporting increased data collection to identify new treatments for women."

American Heart Association President Gordon Tomaselli, M.D., said the measure would make a major impact. "With nearly 422,000 women's lives lost each year from heart disease and stroke, we applaud U.S. Representative Lois Capps for introducing legislation that will help improve the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of the number one killer of women. The HEART for Women Act seeks to eliminate cardiovascular inequities and reduce death rates from this largely preventable disease," Tomaselli said.

"Women have a greater risk of heart disease than men. It is imperative to provide access to proper cardiovascular disease care for all women through passage of the HEART for Women Act. The HEART for Women Act is vital to the health of all women and is must-pass legislation," said

Phyllis Greenberger, M.S.W., president and chief executive officer of the Society for Women's Health Research.

"We need to know how drugs, treatments and devices affect women living with heart disease if we are going to decrease morbidity and mortality caused by heart disease, the number one killer of women. This bill will shine a light on how well the FDA reports research results stratified by sex, race and ethnicity," said Lisa M. Tate, chief executive officer of WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease.

Every minute, someone's wife, mother, daughter or sister dies from heart disease, stroke or other forms of cardiovascular disease in the U.S. More than one in three women has some form of cardiovascular disease, including nearly half of all African-American women and 34 percent of white women. More than 90 percent of primary care physicians do not know that more women die each year from these diseases than men, according to an American Heart Association survey.

The HEART for Women Act was introduced in the U.S. Senate earlier this year by Senators Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., and Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, and has received strong bipartisan support. In addition to the American Heart Association, Society for Women's Health Research and WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, the bill is also supported by more than 40 other organizations. For more information, visit yourethecure.org.

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American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – America's No. 1 and No. 4 killers. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The Dallas-based association is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, or visit heart.org and heart.org/advocacy.

Society for Women's Health Research

The Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR), a national nonprofit organization based in Washington D.C., is widely recognized as the thought leader in research on sex differences and is dedicated to improving women's health through advocacy, education and research. Our focus is to clearly demonstrate that sex and gender differences exist and that more research needs to be done to explore conditions that affect women differently, disproportionately or exclusively; and to identify these differences and understand the implications for diagnosis and treatment. Visit SWHR's website at swhr.org for more information.

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease is the only national patient-centered organization dedicated to promoting women's heart health through advocacy, and patient support. As the leading voice for the 42 million American women living with or at risk of heart disease, WomenHeart advocates for equal access to quality care and champions prevention and early detection, accurate diagnosis and proper treatment of women's heart disease. For more information, visit womenheart.org/kit.