

H.R. 1784 - Women's Health Office Act of 2002

(Updated September 18, 2002)

Floor Situation

The House considered H.R. 1784 under suspension of the rules on Tuesday, September 17, 2002; it was agreed to by voice vote.

Summary

H.R. 1784 formally establishes an Office on Women's Health at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and coordinates women's health activities at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality through its Office of Priority Populations.

Background

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush created the Office on Women's Health at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to improve the health of American women. The mission of the office is to direct, develop, coordinate, and advance women's health research, health care services, and public and health care professional education and training across the agencies and offices of the public health services. The Office does this in conjunction with other government agencies, public and private organizations, and consumer and health care professional groups. The Office on Women's Health also advises the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary for Health, on the scientific, medical, ethical, and policy issues related to the advancement of women's health in the United States and internationally.

In addition to the Office of Women's Health located in Washington, D.C., the ten HHS Regional Offices also have a women's health coordinator. The CDC, FDA, and HRSA also maintain separate offices to focus on women's health. In 1992, Congress mandated the establishment of an Associate Administrator for Women's Services at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSA) and, in 1993, an Office of Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Current statistical data show that certain health conditions have a disproportionate impact on women. For example, osteoporosis, asthma, diabetes, and lupus continue to plague women at a higher rate than men. Similar to the purpose of the Office on Women's Health, the National Women's Health Information Center was created by HHS to help share information with the public and medical community on new research advancements and health initiatives focused primarily on women's health.

The Federal government currently spends almost \$70 billion on cross-cutting programs to address women's health.

Legislative History

H.R. 1784 was introduced by Rep. Morella on May 9, 2001. It was reported favorably from the Energy and Commerce Committee, as amended, by voice vote on June 13, 2002. On September 17, 2002, the bill was agreed to, as amended, by voice vote.

Cost Estimate

CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1784 will cost \$27 million in 2003 and \$144 million over the 2003-2007 period. The five-year total will be \$139 million if such inflation adjustments are not made. The legislation will not affect direct spending or receipts, so pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

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