

SEXISM IN WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE

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WHEREAS, The National Institutes of Health (NIH), which is the largest publicly-supported medical research complex in the U.S., devotes comparatively meager funding toward health conditions and certain diseases that primarily affect women; and

WHEREAS, the NIH is negligent in researching health conditions and diseases that predominantly affect women, such as autoimmune illnesses, myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, Lyme disease, endometriosis, migraine headache and others, which causes a lack of proper diagnosis and effective treatments for these conditions and diseases; and

WHEREAS, many health care professionals, due to lack of research and education, are not knowledgeable and are ill-equipped to diagnose these illnesses, so that often persons have to search for months or years to get a useful diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, if these conditions and diseases were diagnosed in early stages, needless suffering and even deaths of patients could be reduced;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Organization for Women educate its members and raise awareness about these conditions and diseases, including about the delays and misdiagnoses that are caused, in part, by sexism;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW supports the increase of culturally-responsive research on autoimmune disease in women of color, who are disproportionately misdiagnosed and under-diagnosed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW encourage its chapters to contact the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration as well as medical schools, medical residency centers, and the American Medical Association to request that they support an increase in funding for research of these health conditions and diseases predominantly affecting women;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NOW activists urge scientists and medical professionals to avoid stereotypes and misconceptions about health conditions and diseases which predominantly affect women and which have caused doctors to believe women's pain is "all in their heads"; also, to urge health care professionals to post accurate and up-to-date information on their websites; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW encourage and offer directions for chapter leaders and members to contact their State elected officials and Congressional delegation to build support for hearings and legislation authorizing adequate funding for research to advance diagnosis and treatments of these health conditions and diseases that predominantly affect women.