



Alliance for Women's
Health & Prevention

December 14th, 2023

The Honorable Jill Biden, First Lady

Carolyn Mazure, Chair, White House Initiative on Women's Health Research

The White House

Washington, D.C.

Dear Dr. Biden and Dr. Mazure,

As an organization focused on women's preventive health, the [Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention](#) (AWHP) thanks you for your commitment to women's health research and to closing health disparities for women nationwide.

As you launch your exciting new Initiative, we sincerely hope you will include additional research around obesity and its impact on women's health. Obesity is a complex and chronic disease that impacts approximately [1 in 3 women](#) in the United States, with that number expected to continue to rise. Furthermore, obesity and excess body weight are risk factors for nine of the nation's top ten [leading causes of death](#) and are related to over [200 other conditions](#) — such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, cancer, and mental health issues — leading to a tremendous impact on women's health throughout their lifespan. As such, obesity treatment is critical preventive care. Addressing obesity in a comprehensive manner is also a matter of health equity, as it [disproportionately affects women of color](#), especially Black and Hispanic women. Finally, women with obesity face considerable [shame, social stigma, and bias](#), as outdated, medically inaccurate views continue to paint obesity as a choice or a personal failing, rather than a serious [disease](#).

As with nearly any disease, women experience obesity and its impacts differently than men. For instance, obesity is closely tied to [fertility](#), [menopause](#), and [cancer](#), including breast, cervical, and endometrial cancers. This fact must be considered in future research and initiatives, so that obesity care, including anti-obesity medications, surgical interventions, nutrition therapy, and behavioral changes, all consider women's unique needs. Women deserve care that meets them where they are. **As a result, additional research is critical. An increased understanding of the experiences of women living with obesity, its impact on their health, and how obesity treatment can improve health and prevent other diseases would improve the health of countless women.**

Research to better understand the impact of obesity and the benefits of treating this chronic disease as a form of preventing other diseases would have an immediate, tangible, and large-scale impact on the health and well-being of millions of American women.

AWHP is committed to investment in obesity care and treatment as a means for promoting preventive healthcare. More broadly, AWHP advances policies that focus on preventing the burden and progression of disease through several key pillars: addressing upstream social and environmental factors, advancing access to care and treatment, promoting early detection and diagnosis, and advancing vaccine access and affordability. **Given our shared commitment to equitable women's healthcare, we are thrilled by the launch of the Initiative and look forward to working together to expand research and improve outcomes.**

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at mgorham@womenshealthandprevention.org if we can be of any help in the process or if you have any questions. AWHP thanks you for your attention to this important issue and hopes that you will leverage your position to advocate for research that will support the health and wellbeing of all women.

Sincerely,



Millicent Gorham
CEO, Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention