



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **First National Policy & Science Summit on Women’s Cardiovascular Health Provides Roadmap to Improve Diagnosis and Treatment of Leading Cause of Death in Women**

### **Experts make policy recommendations to save women’s lives through critical examination of three key questions about cardiovascular prevention, diagnosis and treatment**

Washington, DC – October 27, 2015 – WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease today announced major policy and program recommendations that will improve diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in women. The recommendations were developed at the first National Policy & Science Summit on Women’s Cardiovascular Health hosted by WomenHeart. More than 130 experts and stakeholders in the field of women’s cardiovascular health including patients, providers, researchers, advocates and policy-makers participated in the Summit. These recommendations are based on exploration of three key unanswered questions in cardiovascular prevention, diagnosis and treatment for women. Prioritized policy and research solutions were developed to address the following:

- What biological variables are most influential in the development and clinical outcomes of heart disease, and what can be done to reduce mortality rates in women?
- What are the best strategies to assess, modify, and prevent a woman’s risk of heart disease?
- What factors influence and explain disparities in cardiovascular disease epidemiology and outcomes between men and women?

Highlights of the proposed recommendations are:

- Include women in medical research, analyze and report sex-specific data and translate that knowledge into care and prevention of heart disease.
- Change healthcare delivery systems for women’s heart prevention and care utilizing multidisciplinary teams and a multispecialty collaborative approach.

- Commit to promoting innovative science and care models related to conditions and risks that are unique and/or different in women, particularly those related to reproduction and menopause.

“These recommendations will provide a renewed sense of urgency among policy-makers, researchers and health care providers to implement a patient-centered holistic approach to sex- and gender-specific heart health,” said Sharonne N. Hayes, MD, FACC, FAHA, Summit Co-Chair.

“We clearly heard the charge from participants to be bold and take innovative steps to promote women’s heart health, and to ensure that research and care address sex differences between men and women,” said Susan Wood, PhD, Summit Co-Chair.

“As the nation’s only patient-centered organization serving the 42 million women living with and at risk for heart disease, WomenHeart’s National Policy & Science Summit provides us with an opportunity to amplify the voices of millions of women demanding that we make progress in the fight against heart disease, the leading cause of death in women,” said Mary McGowan, CEO, WomenHeart. “We will use the input from the expert workgroups to define a bold, achievable and patient-centered approach for decreasing heart disease morbidity and mortality in women,” she added.

Six workgroups, two for each of the three key questions, identified issues, developed solutions, and drafted the recommendations that will be used to develop a roadmap to improve cardiovascular health for women. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in women, and has killed more women than men each year since 1984.

The 2015 WomenHeart Policy & Science Summit on Women’s Cardiovascular Health was co-chaired by:

Sharonne N. Hayes, MD, FACC, FAHA, Professor of Medicine and Cardiovascular Diseases, Founder of the Women’s Heart Clinic, and Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN, and a Founding Member of the WomenHeart Scientific Advisory Council

Susan Wood, PhD, Associate Professor at the Milken Institute School of Public Health and Director of the Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, The George Washington University in Washington, DC, and Member of the WomenHeart Scientific Advisory Council

Keynote speakers at the Summit included:

Nanette Kass Wenger, MD, MACC, MACP, FAHA, Professor of Cardiology Emeritus, Emory University School of Medicine, Consultant, Emory Heart and Vascular Center, and member of the WomenHeart Scientific Advisory Council

Paula Johnson, MD, MPH, Founder and Executive Director, Connors Center for Women’s Health and Gender Biology, and Chief of the Division of Women’s Health, Brigham and Women’s Hospital

Janet Wright, MD, FACC, Executive Director, DHHS Million Hearts® initiative

The Honorable Patricia Scott Schroeder, former U.S. Representative from Colorado

Julie Rovner, Robin Toner Distinguished Fellow and Senior Correspondent at Kaiser Health News, moderated a panel discussion about the three key questions with leading experts in women's cardiovascular health that included:

Susan Bennett, MD, FACC, Consulting Cardiologist, Medstar Washington Hospital Center, and a member of the WomenHeart Scientific Advisory Council

Chloe Bird, PhD, Senior Scientist and Professor of Policy Analysis, Pardee RAND Graduate School, and Editor-in-Chief, *Women's Health Issues* journal

Noel Bairey Merz, MD, FACC, FAHA, Professor of Medicine, Director of the Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Center, Director of the Preventive Cardiac Center, Cedars-Sinai Heart Institute, and a member of WomenHeart's Scientific Advisory Council

Doris Taylor, PhD, Director of Regenerative Medicine Research, and Director of the Center for Cell and Organ Biotechnology at Texas Heart Institute

The 2015 WomenHeart National Policy & Science Summit on Women and Cardiovascular Disease is supported by Gold Sponsor: Novartis Pharmaceuticals; Silver Sponsors: Sanofi-Regeneron, Janssen, Eli Lilly, Gilead, and Abbott Vascular; Bronze Sponsors: Genetech, Boston Scientific, Esperion Therapeutics, and Pfizer; Partner Organizations: American Association of Heart Failure Nurses, Jacobs Institute of Women's Health, StopAfib.Org, The Familial Hypercholesterolemia Foundation, Society for Women's Health Research, and the Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association.

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**WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease**

WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease is the nation's only patient centered organization serving the 43 million American women living with or at risk for heart disease – the leading cause of death for women. WomenHeart is solely devoted to advancing women's heart health through advocacy, community education, and the nation's only patient support network for women living with heart disease. WomenHeart is both a coalition and a community of thousands of members nationwide, including women heart patients and their families, healthcare professionals, and health advocates, all committed to helping women live longer, healthier lives. To join or donate, visit [www.womenheart.org](http://www.womenheart.org).