President Donald Trump The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write to share insights on ensuring the health and wellness of women — including our mothers and daughters - that can reduce avoidable medical expenditures, strengthen our economy with more productive businesses and communities, and save lives. We look forward to working with you as a business leader who knows the importance of government actions to remove barriers to growth and appreciates how government can play a key role in accelerating valuable scientific knowledge; explosive economic returns and job creation; and life-saving medical innovations coming to market and reaching patients.

Many of us have worked for decades to advance the health of women through research, innovation and access and welcome the chance to collaborate with you to close gaps and advance the health of women. Women's health includes those conditions and diseases that solely (maternal health, endometriosis, fibroid tumors, breast cancer, etc.), disproportionately (autoimmune diseases, Alzheimer's, migraines, mental health, etc.) and/or differently (chronic pain, heart disease, lung cancer, etc.) impact the health of women. Despite this touching all of us directly or indirectly, a gap exists due to unnecessary barriers that we must remove to enable innovation to improve and save lives. Moreover, addressing the 25% more time that women spend in poor health relative to men would boost the global economy by at least \$1 trillion annually and generate the equivalent impact of 137 million women in full-time positions by 2040. When medical research is accurate, well-funded and supported by efficacious regulatory approval and coverage policies, the impact on people's lives and the economy can be life-altering.

Accuracy in Research

The gap that exists in the health of women is due to a lack of research over the last several decades. Ensuring research studies include female animals and humans and collecting data on women and men and how various conditions and innovations impact the health of patients is vital not just to more accurate scientific understanding and better health outcomes, but to incentivizing increased investment in businesses innovating in the women's health space. Adverse drug events are twice as common in women as men and without data and understanding as to why this happens for each therapy and how to rectify it with both FDA support and a business strategy for market adoption, many investors shy away from directing dollars toward women's health or investing in examining sex-based differences. By simply increasing female inclusion in studies representative of disease state in the greater population as well as sex-based data collection and analysis in all NIH- and DoD-sponsored studies through the agency's policy on sex as a biological variable and FDA clinical trials and having journal publications include sex-based data in order to be listed in the NIH Library of publications, your administration could close this gap,

 $^{^{1}\,\}underline{\text{https://www.mckinsey.com/mhi/our-insights/closing-the-womens-health-gap-a-1-trillion-dollar-opportunity-to-improve-lives-and-economies}$

include more accurate labeling and spur more R&D efforts to tailor medical innovations to meet male and female patient needs.²

For example, a study on autoimmune disease ideally would have roughly 75-80% women participants since 75-80% of all patients with autoimmune disease are women and it would have significant participation by people of color as African American, Native American and Hispanic women are more susceptible to autoimmune diseases than the general population.³ Meanwhile a study on cardiovascular disease would have roughly 50% women and 50% men since it is the number one killer of both sexes, but has different symptoms and reactions to therapeutics and devices in women and men.⁴ Overall, at least 50% females in the pre-clinical and clinical trials would garner significant gains in furthering more precise research and healthcare for women and men.

Research Funding

Currently, the investment in women's health is quite low as less than 2% private venture funding (when including oncology this rises to 5%) and 8-11% NIH funding is dedicated to this market despite the \$1 trillion opportunity.⁵,⁶ If the various NIH institutes increased their percentage of grant funding toward women's health research to ensure that the total allocation approaches a more equitable rate and the Office of the Director had additional grant funding to fund more worthy grants in women's health, we could enable researchers and clinicians alike to do more with better evidence to back their decision-making in how innovate and treat patients. Another key area of government research funding is the Advanced Research Projects Agency – Health (ARPA-H) that Congress has authorized and appropriated with bipartisan support since 2022. Much like its parent, DARPA, which was created by President Eisenhower, the ARPA-H has consistently supported high-risk high-reward investment in health that traditional venture has been reluctant to back but can transform patient care. It has funded \$113 million in this space, spanning from maternal and fetal health to menopause to pain. This funding is essential to spurring matching private sector investment as it de-risks the opportunities for VCs, entrepreneurial risk-taking ventures that maintain our global competitiveness, and job creation and business growth—all in addition to advancing women's health.

FDA Approval Process

Too often there are unnecessary delays in the FDA approval process in women's health due to the time dedicated to education on sex differences, the biology of women and how innovations work within the female body. Creating an FDA Center of Excellence in Women's Health or related pilot program with appropriate staff trained and experienced in women's health would allow for greater efficiency and

https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm#:~:text=Heart%20disease%20is%20the%20leading.groups%20in%20the%20United%20States.&text=One%20person%20dies%20every%2033,United%20States%20from%20cardiovascular%20disease.&text=About%20695%2C000%20people%20in%20the,1%20in%20every%205%20deaths

² https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7275616/ and

³ https://medicine.musc.edu/departments/dom/news-and-awards/2022/may-2022/understanding-autoimmune-disease-disparities#:~:text=The%20disproportionate%20rates%20at%20which,Ramos%2C%20Ph

⁵ https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/healthcare/our-insights/unlocking-opportunities-in-womens-healthcare</sup>

⁶ https://orwh.od.nih.gov/sites/orwh/files/docs/ORWH_WHC_ExecutiveSummary508.pdf and https://nap.nationalacademies.org/catalog/28586/a-new-vision-for-womens-health-research-transformative-change-at

understanding to properly evaluate innovations, convene companies and patients, and guide their approvals, thus accelerating innovations. Many companies and their investors would welcome this additional guidance and incentivization, and get much needed therapies to patients faster.

Access to Care and Innovation

Yet another concern is how innovations can reach patients effectively across rural, urban and all communities. Reaching populations in an accessible, affordable way is key to overcoming current barriers, such as being geographically located far from care with few transportation options. Therefore, we ask you to consider the real world lived experience of patients, their access to innovation and the role of cost and affordability in shaping access.

For example, women often have uniquely challenging barriers to traditional healthcare access: childcare responsibilities, shift work, and the juggling of children and jobs and/or limited access to transportation. In addition, employed women aged 19-64 spend \$15.4 billion (20%) more than employed men in out-of-pocket healthcare costs each year, based on deductibles, coinsurance, and out-of-pocket maximums, worsening existing gender wage disparities. The percentage drops to 18% when maternity-related services are excluded. This differential often called the "pink tax" means as innovations are developed and enter the marketplace, access can remain a significant challenge. Removing out-of-pocket healthcare costs such as taxes on feminine products, diapers and related items would make a significant difference on the ability for women to access care, thrive and contribute to our economy.

CMS Reimbursement

As you know, many innovations approved by the FDA are not covered by CMS, TRICARE uniformed services health care program, and Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA). In addition, the reimbursement rates can be skewed as male urological surgeries have the dollar value on average that is 27.67% higher than their female-specific equivalent procedures (some of which are necessary following childbirth). The government could play a stronger role in closing these gaps by working with innovators as they move through FDA approval and onto CMS, TRICARE, CHAMPVA and private insurers' reimbursement systems by having companies provide a plan for reaching all patients to be able to access new innovations. Making these plans public and providing annual reports on sex-based data among these patient populations would incentivize intentionality and effectiveness and help insurers to implement this access. These are valuable steps the government can take to increase access to women's health innovations, improve new business growth opportunities, and derisk the investments made by VCs.

Maternal Health, Mental Health and Gynecological Care

A critical aspect of innovation access is maternal health that extends into all aspects of the mental and physical health of women. Today, an estimated 2.2 million U.S. women live in "OB-GYN deserts" and 4.7 million more live in areas with limited access — with many of these areas being in rural parts of the country where it can take several hours to reach a medical facility. In addition, inadequate clinician

⁷ https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/life-sciences-and-health-care/articles/womens-health-equity-disparities.html

⁸ https://scholarship.law.bu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4774&context=faculty_scholarship

⁹ https://www.marchofdimes.org/maternity-care-deserts-report

training and a shortage of medical professionals is impacting the health of women throughout the country and in all age groups spanning from puberty to pregnancy to menopause. The impact is particularly severe among communities of color. Within maternal health, Black mortality rates are nearly three times higher than among white women and Black infants are almost four times as likely to die from complications related to low birthweight. Research and innovation in pre-eclampsia, preterm labor and postpartum hemorrhage remain direly needed for all women to improve outcomes. We believe that OB-GYN physicians, Women's Health Nurse Practitioners, midwives, and Family Medicine physicians as well as community health workers will play critical, multidisciplinary roles in solving the maternal health crisis and access to care in maternity care deserts. There is a unique role that the government can play in attracting these clinicians to address care gaps.

Inter-Agency Coordination

Overall, government could lead the way in creating economic incentives and dashboards that measure and convene researchers, clinicians, entrepreneurs and patients to exchange information and partner in advancing R&D and medical innovations to address women's health to close these health gaps. Adding meaningful funding to this coordination and data-sharing effort, removing silos and increasing communications and collaborations that include private sector and cross-government cooperation that ensures all agencies work together will enable accelerated pathways to bring innovations to patients will ensure that thorough, holistic and productive advancements are achieved with real impact on the economy.

In conclusion, there are many challenges and opportunities when it comes to advancing women's health and bringing innovation to market that you and your administration are well-positioned to accelerate will generate enormous economic return. The most pressing areas where access to innovation will have the greatest impact are from ensuring accuracy in research with representative pre-clinical and clinical participation, increasing research funding in broad women's health areas, closing the gap between FDA approval and coverage by both private and government payers, prioritizing maternal health and gynecological access for all women in all age groups, and organizing inter-agency coordination to advance knowledge and collaborations in women's health to reach all patients throughout the country.

Thank you for your consideration. We are eager to work with you to address these issues. If you have questions, please contact Liz Powell at lpowell@G2Gconsulting.com.

Sincerely,

Liz Powell, Esq., MPH Women's Health Advocates Vienna, VA Kathryn Schubert, MPP Society for Women's Health Research Washington, DC

CC: Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Thune, Minority Leader Jeffries, Minority Leader Schumer and entire U.S. Congress

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¹⁰ https://www.marchofdimes.org/maternity-care-deserts-report-

^{2022#:~:}text=The%20new%20findings%3A&text=In%20maternity%20care%20deserts%20alone,women%20with%20no%20maternity%20care

¹¹ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/maternal-mortality/2021/maternal-mortality-rates-

^{2021.}htm#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20the%20maternal%20mortality,(Figure%201%20and%20Table)

 $^{{\}color{red}^{12}} \, \underline{\text{https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/infant-mortality-and-african-}}$

Martha Nolan, Esq. HealthyWomen

Washington, DC

Kristen Dahlgren

Cancer Vaccine Coalition

Middlebury, VT

Rebecca Cunningham, PhD

Organization for the Study of Sex Differences

Fort Worth, TX

Shikha Jain MD FACP Women in Medicine

Chicago, IL

Stefan Niederauer, PhD

Freyya Inc

Salt Lake City, UT

Jennifer Garrison, PhD

Buck Institute for Research on Aging

San Francisco, CA

Bethany Corbin, Esq.

FemInnovation

Charlotte, NC

Kaethe Henning

Capgemini America, Inc.

Seattle, WA

Cailin Deal, PhD

Moderna

Cambridge, MA

Rachel Sheehan, MSN, RN-BC, C-ONQS

UHS of Delaware

King of Prussia, PA

Barbara Schuler, MPH

VAX 2 STOP CANCER

Birmingham, AL

Santosh Dhakal, DVM, MS, PhD

Kansas State University

Manhatten, KS

Erika Miller, JD

Women First Research Coalition

Washington, DC

Sandra Goff

Retired Educator

Belmont, WV

Akifa Khattak, Esq. MHA, MS Biotech

Her Health AI

Orlando, FL

Lauren Davis

HerMD

Athens, GA

Banrida Wahlang, PhD

University of Louisville

Louisville, KY

Evyn White, PMP

Hera Health Tech

Colorado Springs, CO

Janice Hall, Ph.D.

Maternal Beats, LLC

Pontotoc, MS

Karla Loken

Physician / Fem Select / Lasa Health

Zionsville, IN

BJ Carter, M.S.

HealthyDirections/HealthyChildrenHealthyFutures

New York, NY

Linda Goler Blount, MPH

Black Women's Health Imperative

Atlanta, GA

Claire Gill

National Menopause Foundation, Inc.

Alexandria, VA

Emily Zarecki

Clarion Communications

Sylvania, OH

John McCluskey

Healthcare Advisor & Investor

Madison, WI

Millicent Gorham, PhD (Hon), MBA, FAAN

Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention

Washington, DC

Jyoti Gupta, PhD GE HealthCare Hanover, MD

Yvonne Martinez

Houston Methodist Hospital

Houston, TX

Michela Bedard Period, Inc Portland, OR

Julienne Verdi, Esq.

Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy

Voorhees, NJ

Abby Mercado Rescripted

Denver, CO

Gabriele Niederauer

Freyya, Inc. San Antonio, TX

Sophia Yen, MD, MPH

Physician Sunnyvale, CA

Monica Cepak

Wisp

New York, NY

Janelle Miller, MBA

Consultant Austin, TX

Renata Hoffstetter

Foundation for NIH

North Bethesda, MD

Shannon Cohn, Esq.

Project Endo Oxford, MS

Carmela Tafoya, ACSM H.F.I.

Innerstill Honolulu, HI

Linda Greub, MBA Avestria Ventures San Francisco, CA

Shirley Wang, MS, DDS, CLU

Financial Advisor Nashville, TN

Erin Couchell Comfort Keepers Spartanburg, SC

Marissa Fayer, MBA DeepLook Medical New Haven, CT

Jae-ann Rock

SunStream Consulting, LLC

Tilton, NH

Dr. Bayo Curry-Winchell MD MS

Beyond Clinical Walls

Reno, NV

Crystal Aguh, MD

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Baltimore, MD

Jocelyn Fitzgerald, MD FACS

Physician Pittsburgh, PA

Carol Johnson, BCPA

UterineKind Boston, MA

Claire Houchen, PhD candidate

Scientist

Kansas City, MO

Grace Colón, PhD Board Chair, Emm Los Gatos, CA

Shruti Valjee

Women's Health Advocate

Pittsburgh, PA

Jamie Zahlaway Belsito

Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance

Topsfield, MA

Anna Bauman, MBA

Anna Haas Bauman Consulting

San Jose, CA

Amelia Degenkolb, MS

Novocuff, Inc. Mountain Brook, AL

Chelsea Edge Bonafide Health Dallas, TX

Ishita Shah, PhD Matrubials Inc. Davis, CA

Crystal Tyler, PhD, MPH Illinois Public Health Institute

Chicago, IL

Kate Brigham

Kate Brigham Consulting

Boston, MA

Piush Vidyarthi CrossBay Medical Inc San Diego, CA

Madylin Starke, MHA

Progyny Oxford, NC

Laura Wahlberg

Mother Franklin, MA Rebecca Parr PT, DPT, DHSc Resilience Physical Therapy

Dayton, OH

Shari Beagelman BlackDoctor.org Chicago, IL

Elizabeth Garner, MD, MPH

American Medical Women's Association

Montclair, NJ

Mitzi Krockover, MD Woman Centered Phoenix, AZ

Kelli Kessell

Never Sugar Coated Grand Junction, CO

Aanchal Arora, FNU, PT, MHS, MBA

MIT

Cambridge, MA

Oriana Papin-Zoghbi

AOA Dx, Inc

Denver, CO & New York, NY

Sarah Nicholson Babyscripts Washington, DC

Tracy Warren Venture investor Langhorne, PA

Samantha Rogers

California State University East Bay

Hayward, CA

Hannah Mamuszka, MS

Alva10

Lexington, MA

Maria Sophocles, MD, FACOG, IF, NCMP

The Honey Pot Princeton, NJ Kristin Morris

Breast Cancer Survivor

Plymouth, MN

Annette Pompa

International Heart Spasms Alliance

Lehigh Valley, PA

Tara Joiner MPT The Female Edit Park City, UT

Allison London Brown EllaVita Solutions Raleigh, NC

Dana Sun, MBA Venture capitalist Chicago, IL

Christa Kast Consultant Philadelphia, PA

Emily Rymland DNP FNP-C

Tia

Los Angeles, CA

Amanda Burkardt Burkardt, MBA

PHIOGEN Houston, TX

Silvia Damen, MBA Women's Health Advocate

San Francisco, CA

Madeline Hinkamp, MBA/MPP

Consultant Chicago, IL

Nicole Shugrue MBA

Rejoni Bedford, MA

Elizabeth Knipp

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Brooklyn, NY

Lebone Moses Consultant Durham, NC

Theresa Patton

TT Patton Consulting

Oakland, CA

Laly Havern Pharmacist Schertz, TX

Melissa Lawlor, MSN, CNM, FNP-C

Robin's Nest Midwifery Pleasant Valley, NY

Carrie Haverty, MS, CGC

Genetic Counselor San Francisco, CA

Madeleine Livingston, MBA

Healthcare Startups New York, NY

Melissa Bowley Flourish Care Newport, RI

Colby Holtshouse Organon LLC Mountain View, CA

Laura Okafor Crain

Perry

New York, NY

Ivana Magovcevic-Liebisch, PhD, JD

Vigil Neuroscience Watertown, MA

Jami Crist

Consultant – LERA Baltimore, MD

Emily Becker, MS

OnemataDC Arvada, CO Janet Hardy, PhD, MSc

Consultant in medication safety in pregnancy

Richford, VT

Kristen O'Neill, PhD

Outlier AI Cranston, RI

Ariel Watson Red Tent PMDD

San Francisco, CA

Kara Connell

My Perimeno-Posse Arlington, VA

Naseem Sayani, MBA

How Women Invest, Venture Capitalist

Los Angeles, CA

Marissa Fayer, MBA

HERhealthEQ New Rochelle, NY

Susan Willig, MBA

TrueNorth

Laguna Beach, CA

Susan Vogler, DO, FACOG, MSCP Women's Health Expert and Advocate

Boston, MA

Stephanie Denis, PTA

PTA

Brooklyn, NY

Allison Lewin Menowar

San Francisco, CA

Christine Brennan, PhD Vertex Ventures HC Cambridge, MA

Stefanie Judd-Lee

Manager, Regulatory Affairs

Third Lake, IL

Lynette Kozuma MedtechWOMEN San Francisco, CA

Jane Varian, NP

FOUNDATION MEDICINE

Saratoga Springs, NY

Clare Dougherty

Brem Foundation to Defeat Breast Cancer

Silver Spring, MD

Stephanie Collins, RN, BSN, BCPA

Eido Bio Dallas, TX

Maura Rosenfeld DermAb.io Pittsburgh, PA

Sarah Higgins Cheng, DNP, APRN, WHNP-BC

Nurse practitioner

Tampa, FL

Ricky Cordova

Harvard Business School

Cambridge, MA

Rhea Choudhury, MBA Clinical Strategy Leader

Los Angeles, CA

Ellen Rudolph WellTheory

San Francisco, CA

Vicky RT, RDMS, RVT

iSonoHealth Beaver Falls, PA

Kristin Wagner Juniper Biomedical Worcester, MA

Pearl Huang PhD
Dunad Therapeutics

Boston, MA

Karen Cohn, PhD Consultant

New York, NY

Jennifer Boerer Mother

Glenmoore, PA

Neda Razavi, MBA CEO, iSono Health Menlo Park, CA

Catherine Sabatos-Peyton, PhD CEO, Larkspur Biosciences

Cambridge, MA

Liza Kunz, MD Physician Sunnyvale, CA

Dana Consultant

D. DeSanto Consulting

New York, NY

Courtney Wagner, INHC The Morning Pause

Atlanta, GA

Anne Bray ex-Google Concord, MA

Paula Amato **OHSU**

Portland, OR

Sabrina Johnson Daré Bioscience, Inc San Diego, CA

Brittany Biggett-Heeren, RHIA, CHTS-IM

Prismatic Venus Fitness

Orlando, FL

Robin Austin, PhD, DNP, RN, FAAN University of Minnesota School of Nursing

Minneapolis, MN

Livia Han Compass

San Francisco, CA

Jodi Neuhauser In Women's Health Charlottesville, VA

Joyce Lee

Harvard University Boston, MA

Karie Knightly, BS Health Advocate Annapolis, MD

Katie Pescatello, RN, MSN, FNP-C

KP Healthwriter Arlington, MA

Brandi Combs

Entrepreneur - Health Coach

Kyle, TX

Peter Nguyen PRO-spectus San Diego, CA

Danielle Ralic Ancora.ai Boston, MA

Magdalene Moran, PhD

Executive

Watertown, MA

Shadi Saberi, PhD. iSono Health, Inc.

South San Francisco, CA

Patricia Silveyra PhD

Scientist

Bloomington, IN

Nicole Torrillo-Smith

Advertising

Port Washington, NY

Maryon Stewart BEM Femmar Health Inc Hollywood, FL

Sheena Franklin K'ept Health Washington, DC

Nick Svencer Rejoni Bedford, MA

Carlene Esposito Antodote

East Greenwich, RI

Katherine Palmer, MPH Science Communicator

Frederick, MD

Kara DeMaio Aqua Fem, LLC Charleston, SC

Cydnee DeToy, MBA Cydnee DeToy Coaching

New York, NY

Krista Petrosoff

Teacher Highland, NY

Sabra Klein Ph.D

Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, MD

Michelle Wu, MSCEP Wu Consulting, LLC

Cranston, RI

Melissa DeYoung

Abbvie Pontiac, IL

Karen Kariv

K Squared Consulting Brookline, MA Kelly Gonda Nurse practitioner Superior, CO

Rachel Butler

Catalytic Impact Foundation

Hingham, MA

Tracy Bale, PhD Neuroscientist Denver, CO

Simal Ozen Irmak, PhD, MPH

Tibi Health

San Francisco, CA

Amanda Chen, MPhil, PhD Vertex Ventures HC Cambridge, MA

Margaret Melville MBA

Lasa Health Boulder, CO

Iris Kim NBC News Los Angeles, CA

Helen Shik

Shik Communications LLC

Sudbury, MA

Elridge Proctor, MPA GO2 for Lung Cancer Washington, DC

Sharon Perelman

University of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, PA

Sateria Venable Fibroid Foundation Rockville, MD

Stephanie Bussen, MS MBA

Clinical Researcher San Marcos, CA Christine Neipert, PhD, JD

Consultant Miami, FL

Samina Bari

Samina Bari Advisors Hayward Hills, CA

Sheryl Silverman Consultant Pittsburgh, PA

Lydia Acuña

Founder & CEO at Diagnoza and Åsna Consulting

Pasadena, CA

Colleen Meehan

Creative Director, Publicis Groupe

New York, NY

Jill Liss MD Physician Denver, CO

Susie Turkson, Ph.D.

Virginia Commonwealth University

Richmond, VA

Marcie Caplan

Retired

Lakewood Ranch, FL

Paula Soteropoulos, MSChE Ensoma, 5AM Ventures

Boston, MA

Ana Moreno, PhD Navega Therapeutics San Diego, CA

Erin Patinkin

MIT

Somerville, MA

Kendra Broussard, DNP KMG-Thirty Madison New York, NY Jenneh Rishe, BSN, RN The Endometriosis Coalition

Philadelphia, PA

Cathleen Dohrn, PhD

The Chrysalis Initiative & HerHealthX

Libertyville, IL

Rosana Kapeller, M.D., Ph.D.

ROME Therapeutics

Boston, MA

Martha Kirk, PA-C Physician Assistant Burlington, VT

Angie You

Architect Therapeutics

San Diego, CA

Shehnaaz Suliman

Recode

Burlingame, CA

Kathleen Lemaitre, MD, FACOG

Premier Research Weston, MA

Maria Soloveychik

SyntheX

San Francisco, CA

Alise Reicin MD Tectonic Therapeutic Watertown, MA

Hong Wan

Tallac Therapeutics Burlingame, CA

Joanne Kotz, PhD

Former CEO, Jnana Therapeutics

Boston, MA

Loreanne Jacob

Passionista Collective, LLC

Wilmington, NC

JeenJoo Sophia Kang, PhD

Appia Bio Culver City, CA

Angelique Hopkins, PhD, MPH

Pharma

Mount Laurel, NJ

Bridgette Blazek MD

Celerion Phoenix, AZ

Sheila Gujrathi Physician

San Diego, CA

Susan Seletz Caregiver Pittsburgh, PA

Katherine Vega Stultz Board member and advisor

Burlingame, CA

Rhonda Horvitz, RDH Dental Hygienist Pittsburgh, PA

Autumn Ehnow Medicines360 San Francisco, CA

Jennifer Arnold

Engineer and current MBA student

Cambridge, MA

Dominique Verhelle, PhD,MBA

NextRNA Therapeutics

Boston, MA

Monica Hahn

Owner of Elements Massage Walnut Creek

Walnut Creek, CA

Sarah Boyce Avidity Bio

San Diego, CA

Amar Sawhney, PhD

Rejoni, Inc. Lexington, MA

Lynn Banaszak

The Caileigh Lynn McDowell Foundation

Pittsburgh, PA

Vickery Prongay, MPA Research Consultant

Seattle, WA

Julia Owens

Verto Therapeutics

Boston, MA

Daisy Robinton, PhD

Consultant Los Angeles, CA

Abigail Jenkins Aquestive

Melbourne Beach, FL

Callae Snively, MS

Thyme Care Riverside, CT

Barbara Woods

Educator

New York, NY

Rekha Hemrajani

Biotech Board Member

Burlingame, CA

Aldona Spiegel, MD

Surgeon Houston, TX

Deb Geraghty, PhD

Anokion

Cambridge, MA

Audrey Jones

Houston Methodist Hospital

Houston, MA

Burton Carbino IV MS

Clinical Scientist

Philadelphia, PA

Hillary Boswell MD

Complete Midlife Wellness Center

Houston, TX

Kelly Beck

Trench Therapeutics Romansville, PA

Rebecca Smith, CADC

Consultant

Wyoming, PA

Tao Wen

New York, NY

Sara Dean, DNP, APRN, WHNP-BC

Clinician

Houston, TX

Helen Jonsen Journalist

Hudson, NY

Jade Curtis Blackdoctor.org Atlanta, GA

Leena Das-Young, Pharm.D.

Caliber Biosciences New York, NY

Tanya Herzog, DVM, DCLAM

Houston Methodist Research Institute

Houston, TX

Amanda Skerski

Woman

Los Angeles, CA

Wendye Robbins

Incendia Therapeutics, Inc.

Boston, MA

Jodi Andrews

ProTrials Research, Inc.

Los Gatos, CA

Bunny Ellerin, MBA

Founder

Brooklyn, NY

Elridge Proctor, MPA GO2 for Lung Cancer

Washington, DC

Kira Navarre

Self

Santa Monica, CA

Lyn Baranowski Avalyn Pharma Cambridge, MA

Erika Smith, MBA

CEO, EpiTET Therapeutics

New Haven, CT

Amy Millman Stagenext llc Bethesda, MD

Wendy Davis GestVision, Inc Guildford, CT

Santosh Pandipati, MD, FACOG

Lōvu Health Los Gatos, CA

Yelena Wetherill, PhD CEO, Angara Bio Boston, MA

Jill Davis Pharmaceutical Guilford, CT

Omolade Alawode, MSc, CHES

Public health educator

Columbia, MD

Lisa Lechner

FemmeBright Health

New York, NY

Marianne Slight

Society for Women's Health Research

Cambridge, MA

Susan Solinsky

Healthcare innovator, investor, and board member

San Francisco, CA

Katir Severt MBA Let's Talk Wimen

Minneapolis, MN

Sheena Aurora MD

Physician Palo Alto, CA

Teonna Woolford

Sickle Cell Reproductive Health Education Directive

Owings Mills, MD

Sandra Dunn

Business

San Diego, CA

Andrea Moreira

Physician

Pittsburgh, PA

Christina Young

Rejoni, Inc

Woburn, MA

Julie Wood

Consultant

El Sobrante, CA

Corinne Gardner, MSN, CEO and Investor

Investor, clinician

Charlottesville, VA

Rachel Braun Scherl, MBA SPARK Solutions for Growth

West Orange, NJ

Heather Pitorak, MPH

Public health professional

Seattle, WA

Zuri Hawkins-Jarrett, PharmD, MPH

Pharmacy Consultant

Smyrna, GA

Natalie Herzog

Real Estate

Houston, TX

Serene Issa Author

New York, NY

Meilin Zhu

MIT/Harvard

Cambridge, MA

Emily Serebryany

Institute FLE

Los Angeles, CA

Margaret Jackson, D.Phil.

BYOMass Inc.

Boston, MA

Emily Stein

Gaia

New York, NY

John Stallone, PhD

Biomedical Research Scientist, University Professor

Hempstead, TX

Lena Rice

The Health Management Academy

Washington, DC

Samantha Tanner, RN

Nurse

Jackson, WI

Debbie Garner, MBA

FEMSelect Inc.

San Francisco, CA

Ana Radeljevic Adventus Partners Cambridge, MA Adedayo Adeniyi Adeniyi GO2 for Lung Cancer Washington, DC

Jessica Foley, PhD

Focused Ultrasound Foundation

Bethesda, MD

Yousef Tanas, MD

Postdoctoral Fellow at Houston Methodist Hospital

Houston, TX

Valerie Toler, RN

Pharmacovigilance Consultant, Registered Nurse

Oakland, CA

Gregg Klang

Cern Corporation, Inc.

Coto de Caza, CA

Carolyn Kay

OBGYN Physician

Seattle, WA

Amanda Pick Mayne Pharma Raleigh, NC

Rizwana Fareeduddin, MD, MBA

Physician Orlando, FL Kathryn Zamiela

Pre-Medicine student at Northwestern University

Chicago, IL

Tammy Mahaney, DNP-FNP

Bella Primary Care Lafayette, CA Jessica Kirkland Caldwell, PhD

Cleveland Clinic Las Vegas, NV

Brenna Finegan, MPH Candidate 2025

University of Connecticut

Hartford, CT

Maura Gildea, MPH

Public Health Professional

Washington, DC

Michelle Agudelo Haus of Flow LLC Andre Conner Consultant

San Francisco, CA Cary, NC

Ventureneer

Geri Stengel

New York, NY

Bhuchitra Singh, MD, MPH, MS, MBA

Research Physician Baltimore, MD

Margaret Karow

Gainesville, FL

Karow Consulting

Marisa Guajardo Student researcher Charlottesville, VA

ther

Carolyn Moor

Widow Advocate Winter Park, FL Nicole Stockenberger, PMP

Consultant Houston, TX

Natalie Shew EmployWell Fayetteville, AR Allison O'Brien LERA Health Baltimore, MD Morgan Collier Women in Medicine

Chicago, IL

Kim Ledgerwood HealthyWomen Towson, MD

Stella Goulopoulou, PhD Loma Linda University Loma Linda, CA

Jennifer Realo LERA Health Denver, CO

Morgan Stanton, PhD Opal Therapeutics San Francisco, CA

Jessica Bradshaw, PhD

UNTHSC Fort Worth, TX

Sandra Butler, MPH Mass General Brigham

Boston, MA

Emily Post

Research Assistant Las Vegas, NV

Maria Cardenas, MD Endeavor Health Chicago, IL

Carolyn Witte Founding CEO, Tia San Francisco, CA

Zack Lyon

H3Pelvic Therapy Systems

Lewisville, NC

Roxana Belciu-Kerns

Amarastesia

West Palm Beach, FL

Shannon Topinka, MBA
The Collaborative Strategists

Los Angeles, CA

Sheridan Orison, CNA Prime Healthcare Las Vegas, NV

Lauren Gage Triplemoon Dallas, TX

Michelle Oyen, PhD

Professor Detroit, MI

Eris Hanson GenWell

Washington, DC

Sara Brown

Prevent Blindness Chicago, IL

Anish Sebastian Babyscripts New York, NY

Annie Scolamieri, MHA

Healthcare Consultant, Asymmetry Group, LLC

Boston, MA

Lindsey MBA Consultant Denver, CO

Elizabeth Vaysman, Esq.

ConceiveAbilities Philadelphia, PA

Natalia Pozuelo, MS Kent State University Cleveland, OH

Kristen Schultz, MBA, MPP Woodland Strategic Advisors

Chicago, IL

Taylor Janvrin Consultant New York, NY

Kenny George, PhD

AcreTrader Fayetteville, AR

Molly Bachmann PT, DPT, Birth Doula

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI

Catherine Stehman-Breen MD

Physician Boston, MA

Omonseigho Talton, PhD University of Detroit Mercy

Detroit, MI

Contessa Ricci, PhD

Washington State University

Seattle, WA

Melisa Oliva

Jackson Health System

Miami, FL

Denise Paleothodoros

Citrine Minds
Orland Park, IL

Lauren Coates, MA

Healthcare business leader

Lakewood, CO

Laura Elliott

Maryland Institute College of Art

Owings Mills, MD

Sara Della Ripa, M.S., M.S.

ArcHealth Foundation

Los Angeles, CA

Courtney Carter, MSN, APRN, FNP-C

Nurse Practitioner

Dallas, TX

Chris Helms Mamaya Health Nashville, TN

Somna Pati MS Rosy Wellness New York, NY

Whitney Stout athenahealth Princeton, TX

Rachel Gelman, DPT RMG Physical Therapy Inc

San Francisco, CA

Julia Rozman, ACRP-CP Senior Consultant/SME

Miami, FL

Maria Pienaar Advocate

San Francisco, CA

Thomas de Vlaam

Pillar VC Boston, MA

Kate Hermans Board Chair, Clue Wayne, PA

Deborah Denis, MPA. Policy Analyst. NYU.

Brooklyn, NY

Marissa Reeder

Unified Women's Healthcare

Massapequa, NY

Deirdre O'Connor

Gibson Sotheby's International Realty

Newton, MA

Heather Pierce Homeward Health Flagstaff, AZ Kate Liebelt

Springboard Enterprises

Chicago, IL

Jennifer Henius, LCSW Caregiver Whole Health

Palm Harbor, FL

Emily Kraus, MD

Stanford physician and researcher

Portola Valley, CA

Jenny LaCross, PT, DPT, PhD, ATC

Physical Therapist, MOVE Physical Therapy

Ypsilanti, MI

Ketki Karanam, PhD

investor Boston, MA

Pamela Price, RN, BS The Balm In Gilead, Inc.

Richmond, VA

Christine O'Brien, PhD Armor Medical Inc Saint Louis, MO

Cherando Dubose.MPH

Advocate Charlotte, NC

Alissa Erogbogbo, MD FACOG

Physician Los Altos, CA

Katie Thurer, MD Gynecologist Chicago, IL

Kedra Priest Counselor Austin, TX

Summer Owen

Peach Tree Healthcare

Sacramento, CA

Ingrid Harm-Ernandes PT, WCS

Physical Therapist, National Presenter, Author

Efland, NC

Shannon Chapman, Esq. Fulton Jeang, PLLC

Austin, TX

Munira Ahmed

Consultant, NY-SBC

Queens, NY

Bria Butler Consultant Cupertino, CA

Kylie Jones, MS

UNT Health Science Center

Fort Worth, TX

Alexandra Fennell, Esq.

Grace

Cambridge, MA

Juliana Kling Physician

Cave Creek, AZ

Amanda Osse, PhD Postdoctoral Scholar Las Vegas, NV

Natalie Tronson

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI

Kristen Schuh, MS University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI

Ruth Zuniga Consultant Tacoma, WA

Sarah Browning, MA

Matter Communications, Health Division

Dallas, TX

Elif Arsoy Advocate Princeton, NJ

Sally Wolf, M.Ed, MBA

New York, NY

LightWorks

Robin Lommori, CPM Making Mommies Phoenix, AZ

Mackenzie Woock University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI

Emily Lindblad

AllPaths Family Building

Hudson, MA

Heather Guidone, BCPA Center for Endometriosis Care

Atlanta, GA

Katie Kirsch MM AsteriskDAO Detroit, MI

Dana DeSanto, Founder

Consultant New York, NY

Dixie Swartwood

My Density Matters Hawthorn Woods, IL

Nirshila Chand, DrPH, MPH Public Health Specialist. Redwood City, CA

Lyn Behnke, DNP, FNPBC, PMHNPBC, CHFN

Harmony Wellness Center

Tawas City, MI

Anastasia Perez Ternent Billion Minds Institute San Francisco, CA Jeanette Contreras, MPP Latina Health Collab

Reston, VA

Caitlin Keliher Consultant Washington, DC

Sarah Sheffield, MPA

Consultant Brooklyn, NY

Smita Asrani UE LIfeSciences Philadelphia, PA

Molly Martell, MSc

Consultant

San Francisco, CA

Pearl DCruz Consultant Mercersburg, PA

Jennifer Newell Betty's Co.

San Antonio, TX

Brittany Barreto, PhD Femhealth Insights Phoenix, AZ

Leah Conrad

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, MI

Ramani Varanasi, MS, MBA Biopharmaceutical Executive

Boston, MA

Tint Tint Yap
Retired Executive

West Orange, New Jersey

Sally Oberski

Sally Oberski Consulting

Toledo, OH

Marianne Kaiser Contrary Collective

Kansas City, MO

Jasmin Castañeda

Student

Los Angeles, CA

Tamara Goldschmidt MPH

Elephant Impact Asheville, NC

Ashyil Kumar

Chanel & Ether Collective Hayward/ Sacramento, CA

Renée Meyer, MBA, MIM

REM Consult Tiffin, OH

Tracy Rode, CNE

Patient Empowerment Network

Nashville, TN

Charu Gupta, MD

Physician Chicago, IL

Ella Murthi

University of New England

Bedford, NH

Jodi Smith, Esq.

WomenHeart: National Coalition for Women with

Heart Disease Washington, DC

Natasha Giordano, BSN

Afaxys Sarasota, FL

Pooja Majmudar, PhD

Consultant New York, NY

Ariel Kramer

Klover Communications

Irvine, CA

Shweta Gohil MSN,RN, MPH

LEVY Health San Francisco, CA

Christina Vosbikian

Student

Cambridge, MA

Rachael Kim Femtech Salon Los Angeles, CA

Rachel Rakvica Sprague, MS

Consultant Boston, MA

Luke Janchenko MBA

Consultant New Lenox, IL

Valerie Palmieri, BS MT (ASCP), CLS

CEO/Founder Monroe, CT

Sara Teppema, FSA, MAAA

Alta Advisers Brookfield, IL

Missy Lavender Renalis Health Cleveland, OH

Suzie Bergman, DDS, FTMJF

President Elect American Association of Women

Dentists

Vancouver, WA

Kate LeBlanc

AllPaths Family Building

Malden, MA

Michael MacKinnon

CEO

Boston, MA

Malissa Harris, M.A.

Parent

Columbus, OH

Leslie Ferris Yerger, MBA

My Density Matters

Hawthorn Woods, IL

Sarah Naumes, MA Columbia University

New York, NY

Tara Kochis Consultant Herndon, VA

Chelsea Hedrick, MS, RAC Women's Health advocates

Ventura, CA

Catherine Klapperich Boston University Boston, MA

Alisa Mahan-Zeitz, MBA, MA American Cancer Society

Warren, OH

Bethany Haskell

Coverys

Columbia, MD

Carolyn Sufrin, MD, PhD

Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Baltimore, MD

Lisa McDonald, MPH

Consultant Larchmont, NY

Lisa-Jean Clifford Gestalt Diagnostics Spokane, WA

Christina Gomez, MPH

IL Breast and Cervical Cancer Program

Elgin, IL

Michael Nall

Board Member - Clearity, PRECEDE

Dana Point, CA

Sarah Rosen, PhD

Scientist at WashU school of medicine

St. Louis, MO

Ashley Lyden

NA

Ventura, CA

Gennevieve Douglas

Consultant Truckee, CA

Jen Barth Consultant Portland, OR

Brittany Mayberry

Women's health advocates

Bakersfield, CA

Jessica Bell van der Wal

Frame

San Francisco, CA

Catherine Unruh, MS

Medical Synergy and Innovation Inc

Reading, PA

Angela Zagorsky

Director

Vancouver, WA

Priyanka Jain

Evvy

New York, NY

Nicolette Possemato Aspira Womens Health

Shelton, CT

Mia DuBose-Pettway

Histotech Stratford, CT

Sunny Huang, MD, PhD

Physician scientist Iowa City, IA Bertha Alarcon, DDS

Western University of Health Scienced, College of

Dental Medicine Pomona, CA

Rachel Troy Consultant Washington, DC

Edie Greenberg Talent Collective Chicago, IL

Maddi Holman VC Investor

New York City, NY

Viviana Coles, DMFT, LMFT-S, CST

Psychotherapist at Houston Relationship Therapy

Houston, TX

Yvonne Cherell, MPA

Ohio Urban Community Action Network

Columbus, Ohio

Jessica To-Alemanji, PT, DPT, PhD

Physical Therapist Fairfax, VA

Laura Ibragimova MPH

Anteros Bio Brooklyn, NY

Phyllis Greenberger, MSW Consultant HealthyWomen

Washington, DC

Jackie Froeber HealthyWomen Henderson, NV

Nityasree Srialluri, MD, MHS, MS

Johns Hopkins Baltimore, MD

Sherry Marts, Ph.D.

Former VP for Scientific Research, SWHR (retired)

Washington, DC

Shannon Weatherly, MS3, MA, CNA

Medical Student, Nova Southeastern University; Former Consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Claire Buck

Claire Sommers Buck LLC

Austin, TX

Rheanna Platt, MD

Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, MD

Monica McGrath, ScD

Professor Baltimore, MD

Chi Chiung Grace Chen, MD MHS Johns Hopkins School of Medicine

Baltimore, MD

Andrea Wirtz, PhD, MHS

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Baltimore, MD

Nancy Hicks

NJH Healthcare Communications, LLC

Washington, DC

Astha Ramaiya

Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, MD

Anne Steele, MSN, RN, CPHQ Johns Hopkins Health System

Baltimore, MD

Anna Lettieri, MA

Johns Hopkins University

Burtonsville, MD

Allison McFall, PhD Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, MD

Keri Althoff, PhD, MPH

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Baltimore, MD

Lydia Pecker

Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

Baltimore, MD

Deva MD Physician

Nashville, TN

Corrine ne Parver, Esq.

Women Lawyers On Guard Action Network

McLean, VA

Christine Vaccaro, DO Physician (retired military)

Bethesda, MD

Michael Recht, MD, PhD, MBA

National Bleeding Disorders Foundation

New York, NY

Kaitlin Mann Boston Scientific Somerville, MA

Hannah Markle, ScM Research Scientist Baltimore, MD

Ariela Marshall MD

University of Minnesota, American Medical

Women's Association Minneapolis, MN

Caroline Moreau, PhD

Professor Baltimore, MD

Catrina Marcell, Patient Advocate

Catrina Marcell Consulting

McKinney, TX

Clare Conry-Murray, Ph.D. Johns Hopkins University Merion Station, PA

Taylor Hahn, MD, FACOG, MSCP

Physician Westfield, IN Laura Ensign, PhD Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, MD

Jaime Long

Penn State College of Medicine

Hershey, PA

Casey Taylor

Johns Hopkins University

Baltimore, MD

Kathleen Keefe, Owner Activities To Go Inc. Westlake, OH

Nancy Glass, PhD, MPH, MSN, RN

Nurse

Baltimore, MD

Kerry Funkhouser, EdD

Foundation for Women & Girls with Blood

Disorders Montclair, NJ

Fenna Sille, PhD, MS Assistant Professor Baltimore, MD

Kenneth Mann PhD

Professor Emeritus Biochemistry and Medicine

University of Vermont Atlantic Beach, FL

Jennifer Finucane

Advocate Portland, OR

Alison Sizer

Growth Impact LLC Midlothian, VA

Margo Harrison MD MPH

CEO, Wave Bye Inc; Adjoint Assistant Professor,

University of Colorado

Denver, CO

Jennifer Dusenbury Self advocate Clayton, NC Amy Park, MD Cleveland Clinic Cleveland, OH

Kaitlin Christine Gabbi, Inc.

Brooklyn, New York

Elizabeth Finucane Jeanne

Consultant

San Francisco, CA

Sarah Horvath, MD, MSHP, FACOG

Physician

Hershey, Pennsylvania

Kerry Krauss, MD FACOG

Physician, Medical Director at Natural Cycles

Ambler, PA

Nathan Schaefer

National Bleeding Disorders Foundation

New York City, NY

Felicia Lane MS, MD

Professor Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of

California Irvine

Newport Beach, California

Carly Crowder, MD

UC Irvine Urogynecologist and Reconstructive

Pelvic Surgery Orange, CA

Kate Meriwether, MD

Society of Gynecologic Surgeons

Albuquerque, NM

Cara King, DO, MS

Surgeon

Cleveland, OH

Ashley Palmieri Consultant Brooklyn, NY Miles Murphy

Axia Women's Health Philadelphia, PA

Jeanne McPhee, PhD

UCSF

San Francisco, CA

Dominique Borchard, PA-C UCI Department of OB/GYN

Orange, CA

Krista Reagan, MD

Physician Tacoma, WA

Pavitra Kotini-Shah, MD Physician consultant

Chicago, IL

Mofiyin Obadina, MD

UNC

Chapel Hill, NC

David Rahn, MD

Physician, Professor of Ob/Gyn

Dallas, TX

Cathleen Dohrn, PhD

Princeton10 Green Oaks, IL

Suzy Leous, MPA

American Society of Hematology

Washington, DC

ADi Diner, PhD iFocus Health San Jose, CA

Scott Blood, RAC

Consultant Stow, MA Julie Silverstein

Springboard 2000 Enterprises Inc

McClean, VA

Katherine Cameron, MD MSCE MBE

Physician

Baltimore, MD

Claire Larson Magnite

Brooklyn, NY

Filippo Cieri Psy.D. Ph.D. Researcher at Cleveland Clinic

Las Vegas, NV

Bridget Richard, LISW-S

Lamplight Counseling Services, LLC

Strongsville, OH

Sonnet Daymont, LMFT

Psychotherapist Los Angeles, CA

Rebekah Foster, MBA

Head of Data New York, NY

Noelani Guaderrama, MD

Physician

Dana Point, CA

Laura McKain, MD, FACOG McKain Consulting LLC

San Antonio, TX

Melisa Holmes, MD

Girlology Athens, GA

Zainab Wadood

Strategist

Jersey City, NJ

Christine Sam, PharmD

Pfizer

New York, NY

Shannon Wood, PhD, MSc

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Baltimore, MD

Robin Christenson, MPT

Reborn Pelvic Health and Wellness

Sandy, UT

Laura Molloy, LMSW

Social Worker Arlington, VA

Andrea Conner Consultant Cary, NC

Diona Jaslow Consultant Edmonds, WA

Leslie Taylor Half the Sky LLC San Francisco, CA

Megan Loy, CMD

Consultant Denver, CO

Tracey Welson-Rossman Journal My Health

Fort Washington, PA

Christine Rohan Vasowatch Inc Philadelphia, PA

Guillaume Skalli Paloma Health New York, NY

Gail Feltham

Shore Strategies Life Sciences

Brielle, NJ

Catherine Mott BlueTree VC Pittsburgh, PA Laura Volgenau Marketer New York, NY

Tarul Kode, PharmD LOUD Capital Sammamish, WA

Anna Bauman Consultant San Jose, CA

Sarah Khan Business Leader Alamo, CA

Susana Craig

COO

San Jose, CA

Nicole Danos, PhD Associate Professor University of San Diego

San Diego, CA

Rebecca McNeilly, BSME, MBA

Consultant McLean, VA

Mary Lonergan Mary Lonergan Art Oakland, CA

Kathryn Bowsher, MBA Act One Healthcare San Francisco, CA

Lynn Brusco Executive Consultant Irwi, PA Leslie Cohen Consultant New York, NY

Sharon Moayeri, MD, MPH, MS OC Fertiltiy + OC Biogenix Hoag Hospital, UC Irvine Faculty Newport Beach, CA

Friends Abroad: Gillian Houghton Brooke

Lamia Guellif HÉra Care Solutions

Anjou, QC

London, UK

Agnès Arbat Oxolife Barcelona, Spain

Dr. Delaya Thampi

TLHAI

Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Beatrice Chemla Cukierman Raanana, Israel