Proposed Federal Legislation Supports Uterine Fibroid Awareness

The new legislation would provide funding for uterine fibroid research, education and treatment.

April 21, 2021 By Caroline Tien

Representative Yvette D. Clarke (D–N.Y.) recently introduced HR 2007, better known as the Stephanie Tubbs Jones Uterine Fibroid Research and Education Act of 2021. If passed into law, the bill will fund federal research projects and educational programs about the condition. The bill is named in honor of Clarke's late colleague Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D–Ohio), who developed a reputation as a champion of women's health during her time as a public servant.

Sometimes also known as myomas, uterine fibroids are benign tumors that can cause a range of symptoms, including heavy menstrual bleeding, fatigue, anemia, infertility, pregnancy complications and miscarriage. While they are common in women of all races, fibroids disproportionately affect Black women. By age 25, 25% of Black women will have developed these tumors; by age 50, 80% will have.

In a press release, Clarke cited this racial disparity, among others, as one of her reasons for sponsoring the new legislation. "This glaring health inequality must be addressed," she said. "This disease has ravaged the lives of women—particularly in the Black community—across the country, and increasing funding for research and public education related to fibroids is critical to reversing this devastating trend."

In addition to Clarke, Representative Robin L. Kelly (D–Ill.), Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman (D–N.J.) and Representative David Scott (D–Ga.) sponsored the bill. Several national and international advocacy organizations, including the March of Dimes, the Fibroid Foundation and the Black Women's Health Imperative, endorsed it as well.

"Consistent fibroid research funding will transform the quality of life for millions of women in the United States," Sateria Venable, the founder and chief executive officer of the Fibroid Foundation, told PR Newswire of the bill's potential impact.

Specifically, according to the Society for Women's Health Research (SWHR), the bill includes the following mandates to resolve health inequities associated with the diagnosis and treatment of uterine fibroids:

- The National Institutes of Health would receive $30 million earmarked for fibroid research once a year for five years (2022 through 2026), totaling $150 million.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services would revise an existing database of chronic medical conditions to provide details about fibroid treatment services.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention would develop educational programming about fibroid incidence and prevalence.
- The Health Resources and Services Administration would compile and distribute information about fibroids and their treatment to health care providers nationwide.

SWHR also supported the bill, which was first introduced by Tubbs Jones in 2001 and reintroduced in 2020 by Clarke and Kamala Harris, who was a senator at the time.

For information about a surprising potential uterine fibroid risk factor, read "Childhood Abuse Linked to Uterine Fibroids in African-American Women." To learn more about medications and surgeries that can improve fibroid symptoms, read "Understanding Your Treatment Options for Uterine Fibroids" and "FDA Approves New Option to Treat Heavy Menstrual Bleeding Associated With Fibroids in Women." And finally, here's a list of resources for women with uterine fibroids.

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