



THE VOICE OF MIDLIFE AND OLDER WOMEN

January 30, 2012

Dear Member of Congress:

We are writing to call your attention to and update you on an important women's health matter that has major implications for women's quality of life and health, yet gets very little public discussion.

Recently, OWL— the Voice of Midlife and Older Women — conducted a survey about women's knowledge about menopause and the amount and type of information available to them about this major life stage. Our survey identified a glaring information gap about this important health topic with many women, particularly younger women, lacking even basic information. Among the highlights of the survey findings:

- Nearly 70 percent of younger women (age 30-44), many of whom could shortly experience initial symptoms, say they don't have enough information about menopause;
- Two-thirds of younger women say they do not know most signs and symptoms of some of the most serious and life-altering symptoms of menopause;
- Nearly a quarter of younger women — 24 percent — say they have more information about symptoms and treatments for erectile dysfunction (ED) than menopause.

Our survey also found nearly universal support for an effort to provide women better information. Specifically the survey found:

- 90 percent of women of all ages support a publicly available, Web-based menopause education program that includes information about how to manage and treat menopausal symptoms.

Women need to be educated about this juncture in life earlier so they can know what to expect and can plan for how they'd like to approach their symptoms. Getting reliable information earlier will mean better health and higher quality of life outcomes for women in the future.

As you develop your 2012 health care policy work plans for the next session of Congress, we urge you to add the issue of menopause education to your agenda. Addressing the significant education gap on this major women's health issue will help millions of women and is strongly supported by your constituents.

Sincerely,

Bobbie Ann Brinegar, MSW
Executive Director