

**Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Subcommittee on Health  
Hearing:  
“H.R. 1014, Heart Disease Education, Analysis Research, and Treatment for  
Women Act”**

**Opening Statement**

**May 1, 2007**

**Good morning. Today the Subcommittee is meeting to hear about “H.R. 1014, the Heart Disease Education, Analysis Research, and Treatment for Women Act”, a bill introduced by my good friend, Lois Capps of California.**

**Coronary Heart Disease – often called heart disease – occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the heart muscle become hardened and narrowed due to a buildup of plaque on the arteries inner walls. As plaque continues to build up in the arteries, blood flow to the heart is reduced, which can lead to a heart attack.**

**There is a common misperception that exists today that heart disease is a “man’s disease”. But this simply is not true. In reality, heart disease has a deadly impact on both men *and* women.**

**In fact, I think most people would be surprised to learn that heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States, followed by cancer and stroke. One in four American women dies of heart disease each year, while one in thirty dies of breast-cancer.**

**There are a number of risk factors that might lead a person to develop heart disease, including: cigarette smoking; high blood pressure; high blood cholesterol; overweight; physical inactivity and diabetes. Research shows that more than ninety five percent of those who die from heart disease have at least one of these major risk factors. But many of the risk factors are within our control. We have the ability to decrease our chance of developing heart disease through diet, exercise, and medication therapy.**

**But education is key. Knowing what the risk factors are and how to change them is crucial to decreasing your chance of suffering from heart disease. That is why this bill is so important. Under this legislation, a new program would be authorized to educate healthcare professionals and older women about unique aspects of care in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of women with heart disease.**

**But these risk factors don’t tell the whole story. The interaction between age and sex also play a significant role in developing heart disease. Starting around age fifty, women are at increased risk of developing heart disease. For those women,**

**ensuring access to screening services is vital to survival. Without a way to receive an appropriate screening test, many women who suffer from heart disease will go undetected and be unable to receive proper treatment. Needless to say, those who are uninsured are disproportionately impacted by heart disease because of their inability to access screening services and follow up treatment.**

**Even when there are no barriers to accessing care, determining the most appropriate treatment is crucial. The final component of this bill deals with treatment services and encourages better research into the most effective treatments for women who suffer from heart disease. Although Coronary Heart Disease causes more than 250,000 deaths in women each year, much of the research and clinical trials in the last twenty years on CHD has either excluded women entirely or included only limited numbers of women. This bill would change that by improving the availability of gender specific information on drugs and devices designed to treat heart disease and the risk factors that lead to it.**

**I want to thank Ms. Capps for all her efforts in this area and for leading the charge on so many women's health issues. As a husband and a father of two girls, I know how important it is that we tackle this issue. Thank you again for all that you do.**

**I now recognize our ranking member, my good friend Mr. Deal, for five minutes for the purpose of making an opening statement.**