



Solve M.E.



Solve M.E.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 11, 2020

**BIPARTISAN WOMEN’S CAUCUS TO COLLABORATE WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS NONPROFITS
AND PROMINENT GUESTS FOR VIRTUAL, EDUCATIONAL ROUNDTABLE CONCERNING THE
IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON WOMEN’S HEALTH**

A chorus of expert female voices, including caucus co-chairs Reps. Brenda Lawrence, Debbie Lesko, Vice-Chair Madeleine Dean, and Jedediah Bila of Fox & Friends Weekend to tackle growing concerns

LOS ANGELES, CA — The Solve ME/CFS Initiative (Solve M.E.), The Headache & Migraine Alliance, and Miles for Migraine, nonprofits dedicated to the fight against chronic illnesses, will partner with the Bipartisan Women’s Caucus online **on Wednesday, August 12 from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. EDT** for the “Women’s Chronic Illness During a Pandemic” virtual, educational roundtable. Open to the registered public and moderated by Jedediah Bila, the webinar will approach COVID-19 and chronic illness in women from various angles—stigma impacts on medical care, economic burdens, legislative possibilities, and scientific opportunities. **(Registration link:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4015099114368720143>)

Stigma in women’s health is a cross-cutting women’s issue that affects us all; its impact, demonstrated through Migraine disease and Myalgic Encephalomyelitis or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS), is a problem that must be addressed during this time of crisis. The distinguished guests of this virtual roundtable will discuss why stigma must be confronted as part of the pandemic response and offer insights into the future of women’s health post-COVID-19.

PANELISTS INCLUDE:

- **Joanna Kempner**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Rutgers University (Women's Health)
- **Nancy Klimas**, M.D., Director, Institute for Neuro-Immune Medicine, Nova Southeastern University, Medical Expert (ME/CFS)
- **Jaime Sanders**, Patient Advocate (Migraine)
- **Ashanti Daniel**, B.S.N, R.N. (ME/CFS)
- **Dawn Buse**, Ph.D., Clinical Professor of Neurology, Albert Einstein College of Medicine; Board of Directors, American Headache Society



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“For far too long women’s voices have gone unheard. Having a chronic illness during a pandemic condition is especially difficult, as this period of instability can bring new and overwhelming challenges and feelings of uncertainty,” said **Representative Brenda Lawrence (D-MI)**. “Chronic illnesses do not take a pause during a pandemic. I’m proud to have the Bipartisan Women’s Caucus collaborate on such an important topic and see how we can address the stigma women with chronic illnesses face moving forward.”

As emerging evidence indicates lasting health complications from COVID-19, concerns grow about how the ongoing pandemic will impact women with chronic illness. Migraine disease and ME/CFS are complex, unexplained neurological diseases that are extremely difficult to treat, have post-viral implications, and disproportionately affect women. The two diseases combined currently affect an estimated 38 million Americans, and COVID-19 threatens to substantially increase those figures as the CDC recently announced findings that indicate about one-third of those with mild COVID-19 cases suffer lingering post-viral symptoms.

"It is important to look at the ties between chronic illnesses and lasting health complications from COVID-19," said **Representative Debbie Lesko (R-AZ)**. "This event is an opportunity to openly discuss chronic illnesses that disproportionately affect women and how we can improve our health care system for women and all Americans. I'm excited that the Bipartisan Women's Caucus is supporting this event and facilitating this important discussion."

Women are four times more likely to be diagnosed with ME/CFS, and approximately 80% of reported ME/CFS cases follow acute infection, particularly viral infections. There is no known cure for ME/CFS, nor are there any FDA-approved drugs or treatments.

Migraine disease shares many similarities with ME/CFS insofar as it is a complex, enigmatic, debilitating, and disproportionately impacts women (18% of women have Migraine, 6% of men). The reach of Migraine disease is also devastatingly broad. The World Health Organization places it as one of the ten most disabling illnesses on Earth—four out of every 100 people have some form of daily headache and Migraine accounts for the most substantial part of that.

“Stigmas have long impacted women’s health,” **Representative Madeleine Dean (D-PA)** said. “COVID-19 has only exacerbated health impacts on the female population that already faces unique challenges navigating a biased healthcare system. Thoughtful legislation will support all women, including chronically ill women, ensuring access to care and treatment.”

“Women’s Chronic Illness During a Pandemic”

Wednesday, August 12, 2020 / 2:30 p.m. EST – 4:00 p.m. EST



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ABOUT THE ORGANIZATIONS:

- **The Bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues** is an important, bipartisan forum to discuss major policy issues of our day with a focus on how these issues impact women and families. It is comprised of over 100 Republican and Democratic women House Members.
To learn more: <http://www.wcpinst.org/our-work/the-womens-caucus/>
- **Solve M.E.** is the national nonprofit disease organization representing ME/CFS patients, caregivers, and researchers in the United States.
To learn more: www.solveCFS.org
- **The Headache and Migraine Policy Forum** is a nonprofit organization that seeks to advance public policies and practices that promote accelerated innovation and improved access to treatments for those living with headache disorders and migraine disease. To learn more: <https://www.headachemigraineforum.org/>
- **Miles for Migraine** is a registered nonprofit organization with the mission of improving the lives of people with Migraine and other headache disorders, and their families, by raising public awareness about this disease and helping to find a cure.
To learn more: <https://www.milesformigraine.org/>

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