

The Connecticut General Assembly

House Democrats



REP. GILCHREST AND ENDOMETRIOSIS WORKING GROUP MARK MAJOR MILESTONE IN STATE-FUNDED BIOREPOSITORY PROGRAM

Initiative Expands Research Infrastructure to Accelerate Diagnosis and Treatment for Endometriosis

House Chair of the Human Services Committee Jillian Gilchrest (D–West Hartford), and the Endometriosis Working Group, held a press conference to recognize March as Endometriosis Awareness Month and celebrate a major milestone: the distribution of biorepository samples to the program’s first therapeutic partner, Metri Bio.

This milestone marks the realization of a first-of-its-kind, state-funded endometriosis data and biorepository program, an initiative conceived through pioneering legislation and brought to life through the scientific leadership of The Jackson Laboratory and UConn Health. The program is designed to accelerate the discovery of new diagnostics and treatments for a disease that affects at least one in ten individuals of reproductive age worldwide.

"My heart is full today," said **Representative Jillian Gilchrest**. "When people come together -- researchers, advocates, legislators, those living with the disease - we can create real and lasting change. Connecticut is not only raising awareness about endometriosis, but our state-funded biorepository is leading the way toward diagnostics and treatment."

Metri Bio, the program’s first therapeutic partner, will use standardized patient samples housed in the biorepository at JAX to advance the development of new therapies.

"At Metri Bio, we are building a state-of-the-art human-specific discovery platform to better model the complexity of endometriosis and accelerate the development of non-hormonal, disease-modifying therapies for the 190 million affected worldwide. Central to this effort is the Connecticut data and biorepository program, developed in alignment with WERF-EPHect best-practice guidelines, which provides consistently collected, well-annotated patient samples. This powers rigorous, reproducible research and therapeutic development, facilitating our commitment to transforming care for endometriosis patients." **Kathy Potts, PhD, Chief Operating Officer and co-founder of Metri Bio**

The press conference also highlighted the introduction of Raised Bill 5322, AN ACT CONCERNING A WORKING GROUP REGARDING ENDOMETRIOSIS, which will be heard by the Public Health Committee Wednesday. This bill formalizes the Connecticut Endometriosis Working Group, an effort spearheaded by Rep. Gilchrest, to ensure sustained coordination among stakeholders.

"Through pioneering legislation and the sustained efforts of the Endometriosis Working Group, we

built Connecticut's endometriosis tissue and data biorepository and created a model for coordinated, endometriosis-focused action that other states are now looking to replicate. With H.B. 5322, we are ensuring that this progress is not temporary, but structurally embedded. This is how we move from awareness to durable impact in research, diagnosis, and care." **Elise Courtois, Ph.D., Assistant Professor & Director, Single Cell Biology Lab, The Jackson Laboratory; EndoRISE Co-Director.**

Since its launch in 2023, the Connecticut endometriosis and biorepository program has biobanked more than 5,000 biospecimens from participants across 58 communities statewide.

"Today we celebrate the distribution of our first samples to our first therapeutic partner. This progress is driven by the Endometriosis Working Group—a truly collaborative force of patients, clinicians, researchers, advocates, and policymakers—and House Bill 5322 ensures this work is not symbolic, but structural and sustained. Endometriosis affects one in ten individuals of reproductive age, and continued coordinated action is not optional—it is necessary." **Danielle Luciano, M.D., Professor & Department Chair, OB/GYN, UConn Health Center; EndoRISE Co-Director**

The Connecticut Endometriosis Working Group represents a precedent-setting model grounded in both advocacy and infrastructure development. Its accomplishments have elevated endometriosis within policy conversations related to funding, research, health equity, and long-term public health planning, creating a blueprint for other states and policy-driven initiatives.

The working group and the endometriosis data and biorepository program operate in close coordination and will continue to drive meaningful impact by aligning stakeholders, informing legislative priorities, and ensuring that policy initiatives translate into tangible research advancements and patient-centered outcomes.

Protecting and expanding the infrastructure Connecticut has established will require sustained collaboration, continued policy commitments, and dedicated appropriations. Maintaining a formalized working group is essential to preserving stakeholder engagement and ensuring continued progress in advancing endometriosis research and care.